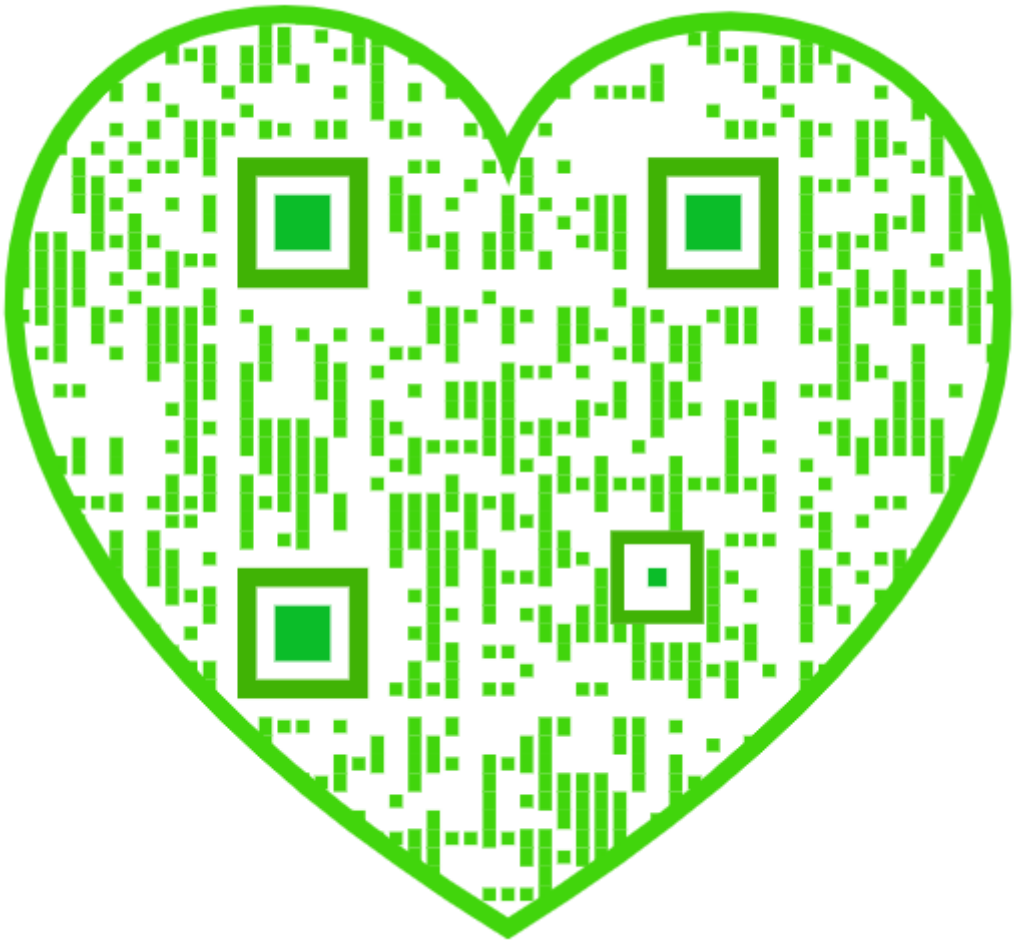
WOOD-ENGRAVING

THE WOOD-ENGRAVER
By Jost Amman (1568)

JOSEPH CUNDALL



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A BRIEF HISTORY

OF

WOOD-ENGRAVING

FROM ITS INVENTION

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(*From Holinshed's 'Chronicles of England,'* 1577)

Page 100

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WOOD-ENGRAVING

FROM ITS INVENTION

BY

JOSEPH CUNDALL

AUTHOR OF 'HOLBEIN AND HIS WORKS' ETC.

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THE WOOD-ENGRAVER
By Jost Amman (1568)

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF

WOOD-ENGRAVING

CHAPTER I

ON THE EARLY PICTURES OF SAINTS

Many volumes have been written on the subject of Wood-Engraving, especially in Germany, Holland, and Belgium, where the art first flourished; as well as in Italy, France, and England; and some of the best of these books have been published during the present century.

The most important of them are, Dr. Dibdin's celebrated bibliographical works; 'A Treatise on Wood-Engraving,' by W. A. Chatto, of which a new edition has lately been issued; 'Wood-Engraving in Italy in the 15th Century,' by Dr. Lippmann; and, above all, 'The Masters of Wood-Engraving,' a magnificent folio volume written by Mr. W. J. Linton—himself a Master—who, besides giving us the benefit of his technical knowledge obtained by the practice of the art for fifty years, presents us with copies, from blocks engraved by himself, of the most celebrated woodcuts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

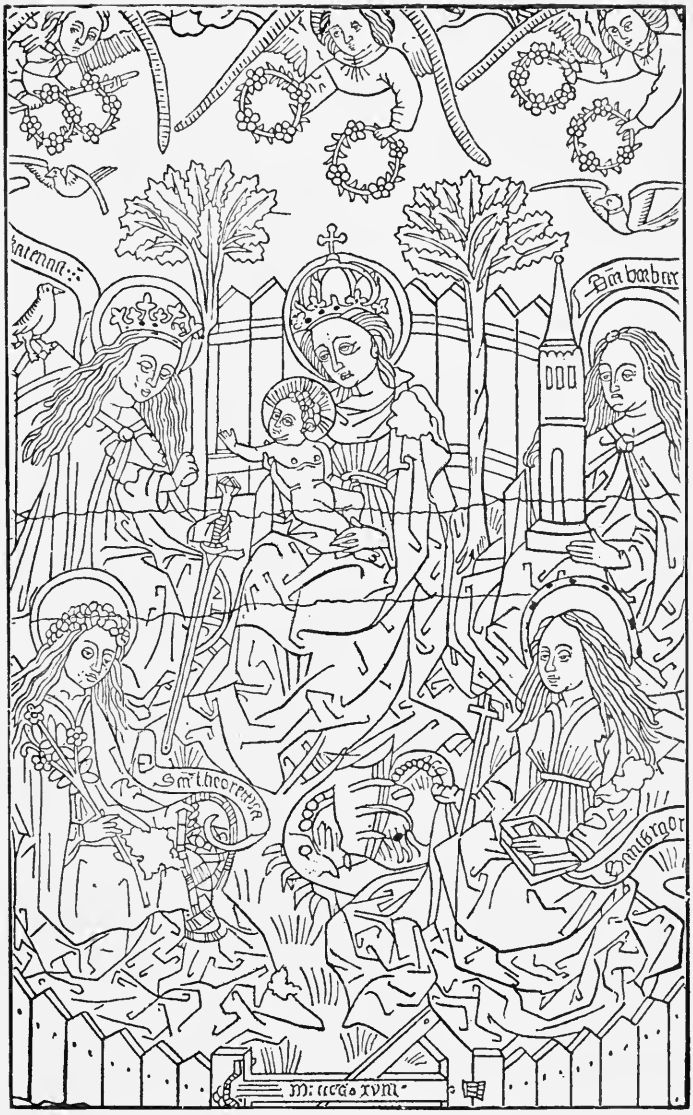
Many writers have asserted that the first wood-engravings are to be found on playing-cards; others maintain that

the very rough prints on the playing-cards of the early fifteenth century were taken from stencil-plates. It is impossible to decide the point, nor is it of much importance; there is no evidence whatever as to the method of their production. They appeared in Europe about the year 1350: they came from the East, but their positive history, according to Dr. Willshire, begins in the year 1392.[1] It has been asserted that many prints of Images of Saints produced by means of wood-engraving preceded even playing-cards.

The first undoubted fact that we can arrive at in the history of wood-engraving is that early in the fifteenth century there were to be found, in many of the monasteries and convents in various parts of Europe, prints of the Virgin with the Holy Infant, the most popular Saints, and Subjects from the Bible, which were certainly taken from engravings on wood; and we have now to describe some typical examples of primitive devotional pictures, printed by the xylographic process. The earliest of these woodcuts may date from 1380, and there are many which are assigned to the first half of the fifteenth century; they were all intended to be coloured by hand, and are therefore simply in outline, without shading. The designs are usually good, but the execution is not always so meritorious.

In the Royal Library at Brussels there is a coloured print of *The Virgin with the Holy Child in her lap*, surrounded by four Saints in an inclosed garden. On the Virgin's right hand sits St. Catherine, with a royal crown on her head, the sword in her left hand, and, leaning against her feet, a broken wheel. Beneath is St. Dorothea crowned with roses, with a branch of a rose-tree in her right hand and the handle of a basket of apples in her left; on the other side are St. Barbara holding her tower, and, under her, St. Margaret with a book

[1] W. H. Willshire, *Playing and other Cards in the British Museum*, 1 vol. 8vo. (1876).



THE VIRGIN WITH FOUR SAINTS

In the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique

in her left hand; her right hand clasps a laidly dragon, and a cross leans upon her arm. Outside the palings a rabbit is feeding; a bird sits on the rail behind St. Catherine, two others are flying, and, above all, three angels are offering chaplets of roses to the Virgin; a palm-tree is growing on each side of her. But the most important part of the print is the very solid three-barred gate at the entrance to the garden, for on the uppermost of the bars we distinctly read **m : cccc° xbiii°**. The print itself measures 14½ inches in height by 9 inches in width, without reckoning the border lines. It was found pasted at the bottom of an old coffer in the possession of an innkeeper at Malines in 1844 by a well-known architect, M. de Noter, who, recognising its great importance, offered it to the Royal Library at Brussels. It has been reproduced in scrupulously exact facsimile and fully described in the work entitled 'Documents iconographiques et typographiques de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique,' published by MM. Muquardt of Brussels. The small letters ° are supposed to represent nails in the gate.

M. Georges Duplessis tells us that he has examined the print minutely several times, and that he does not believe this date has been tampered with in any way. Some collectors and would-be critics maintain that the drawing of the figures and the folds of the garments are of a later date than 1418; if they were to examine the works of Hubert and Jan van Eyck, and the paintings of Meister Stephan Lochner of Cologne, Rogier van der Weyden, and other artists who lived about this time, they would be sufficiently answered. Mr. Linton is of opinion (and there can be no better judge) that the *style* of the engraving does not compel him to attribute it to a later date than 1418, yet both he and Mr. Chatto express their doubts as to its authenticity—it appears to us, without sufficient reason.

About the middle of the eighteenth century Herr Heinecken, a German collector of engravings, discovered, pasted

inside the binding of a manuscript in the library of the convent of Buxheim in Suabia, a folio print brightly coloured of *St. Christopher bearing the Infant Christ.*

The outlines are printed in black ink, not by any kind of press, but in much the same way as that used by wood-engravers of the present day in taking their proofs, who first ink the engraved surface with a printer's ball, then lay the paper carefully over the cut, waxed at the edges to hold the paper firmly, and rub the back of the paper with a burnisher. In the fifteenth century a roller called a *frotton* was used, as being more expeditious.

Our illustration gives an idea of the original, which is still in the cover of the book in which it was discovered, and now in the Spencer Library at Manchester. The cut measures 11½ inches in height by 8½ inches in width, and is coloured after the manner of the time; that is, the Saint's robe is tinted with red and the lining with yellow ochre, the nimbuses are of the same kind of yellow; the robes of Christ and the monk are light blue, of the same tint as the water; the grass and foliage are bright green; the faces, hands, and legs are in a pale flesh-tint; there are but five or six colours used, and they may have been either washed in by hand or brushed in through a stencil-plate. As hand colouring would be quicker and less troublesome, one does not see the advantage of the stencil. The inscription beneath the cut reads thus:—

Cristofori faciem die quacumque tueris Millesima cccc°
Ella nempe die morte mala non morieris xx° tercio

which may be rendered:

> On whatever day the face of Christopher thou shalt see,
> On that day no evil form of death shall visit thee.

Mr. Linton is enthusiastic in praise of this cut. 'I am well content,' he says, 'to give some words of unstinted praise

ST. CHRISTOPHER

The original (11½ *in. by* 8½ *in.*) *is pasted inside the cover of an old manuscript book in the Spencer Library now at Manchester*

to our St. Christopher for the design. I mind not the disproportionate space he occupies in the picture. Is not he famous as a giant? The perspective also is good enough for me, as doubtless it was to those in whose interest the print was issued. It is certain he is crossing a stream; we see a fish beneath the waves. He supports his colossal frame and helps his steady course with a full-grown fruit-bearing palm-tree—fit staff for saintly son of Anak; no heathen he; the nimbus is round his head. As on his shoulders he bears the Lord of the World, can we fail to remark his upturned glance, inquiring why he is thus bowed down by a little child? The blessing hand of the Blessed plainly gives reply. Look again, and see on one side of the stream the merely secular life; is it not all expressed by the mill and the miller and his ass, and far up the steep road (what need for diminishing distance?) the peasant with the sack of flour toiling towards his humble home. And on the other side is the spiritual life —the hermit, by his windowless hut, the warning bell above; he kneels in front, with his lantern of faith lifted high in his hand, a beacon for whatever wayfarer the ferryman may bring. Rank grasses and the fearless rabbit mark the quiet solitude in which the hermit dwells. I can forgive all shortcomings. These old-century men were in earnest.'

In the Spencer collection are two other prints which may be attributed to the same period as the St. Christopher. One is a picture of *The Annunciation*, which was found pasted on the end cover of the book (*Laus Virginis*) in which the St. Christopher was discovered. It is of similar size, and is printed with a dark-coloured pigment, probably by means of a *frotton*. The Angel Gabriel is kneeling before the Virgin, who also is kneeling; she holds a book in her hand, and is represented in a kind of Gothic chapel; a vase with flowers in it stands under one of the diamond-paned windows. The Holy Dove is descending in a flood of rays; unfortunately the figure of the Almighty has been torn from the top left-hand

THE ANNUNCIATION

The original (11½ *in. by* 8½ *in.*) *is pasted inside the cover of an old manuscript book in the Spencer Library*

corner of the print. On one of the pillars of the chapel is a small scroll with the legend

Ave gracia plena dominus tecum.

The wood-engraver may produce his design in two ways, either by means of black lines on a white ground, or by white designs on a black ground. The two methods are here united, while in the St. Christopher one only (the first) is used. Notice the discreet use of masses of black to give force to the design, and to contrast with the lightness of the other part of the picture. The Annunciation belongs to quite a different school to the St. Christopher.

The other print is of St. Bridget of Sweden (who died in 1373). She is seated at a sloping desk, writing with a stylus in a book. The motto above her head is **o brigita bit got für uns** ('O Bridget, pray to God for us'). In the left upper corner is a small representation of the Virgin with the Holy Infant in her arms, opposite is a shield with the letters S.P.Q.R. on it, referring to her journey to Rome. In the lower corners are, on the left, the palm and crown of martyrdom; and on the right is a shield with the *Lion rampant* of Sweden. A pilgrim's hat and scrip hang on a staff behind the Virgin's seat. The print is roughly coloured, evidently by hand.

Many other woodcuts of the same character have been discovered, which are believed to have been engraved in the first half of the fifteenth century. In the Imperial Library at Vienna there is a print of *St. Sebastian*, bearing the date 1437, which was found in the monastery of St. Blaise in the Black Forest. 'Having visited,' says Herr Heinecken, 'in my last tour a great many convents in Franconia, Suabia, Bavaria, and in the Austrian States, I everywhere discovered in their libraries many of these kinds of figures engraved on wood. They were usually pasted either at the beginning or the end of old volumes of the fifteenth century. These facts have confirmed me in my opinion that the next step of the

engraver on wood, after playing-cards, was to engrave figures of Saints, which, being distributed and lost among the laity, were in part preserved by the monks, who pasted them into the earliest printed books with which their libraries were furnished.' Herr Heinecken possessed more than a hundred of these pictures of Saints. There can be little doubt they were produced in the monasteries and convents, and distributed to the people, especially in the processions of the Church, as aids to devotion. Among the thousands of monks who lived in the fifteenth century there must have been many men who, like Fra Angelico, were gifted with sufficient artistic taste to enable them to draw and engrave such a picture as the St. Christopher.

CHAPTER II

ON THE BLOCK BOOKS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

In the first half of the fifteenth century, before the invention of printing by means of movable type, many books were produced in which the woodcuts and the text were engraved on the same page, or sometimes the text was on one page and the woodcut opposite. They were impressed on one side only of the paper, and the two blank pages were often pasted together. They are usually called **Block Books**. Many of the cuts are more than ten inches in height by eight inches in width, and were probably cut with a knife upon smoothly planed planks of the pear-tree, or other fine-grained wood, or possibly some were engraved upon soft metal.

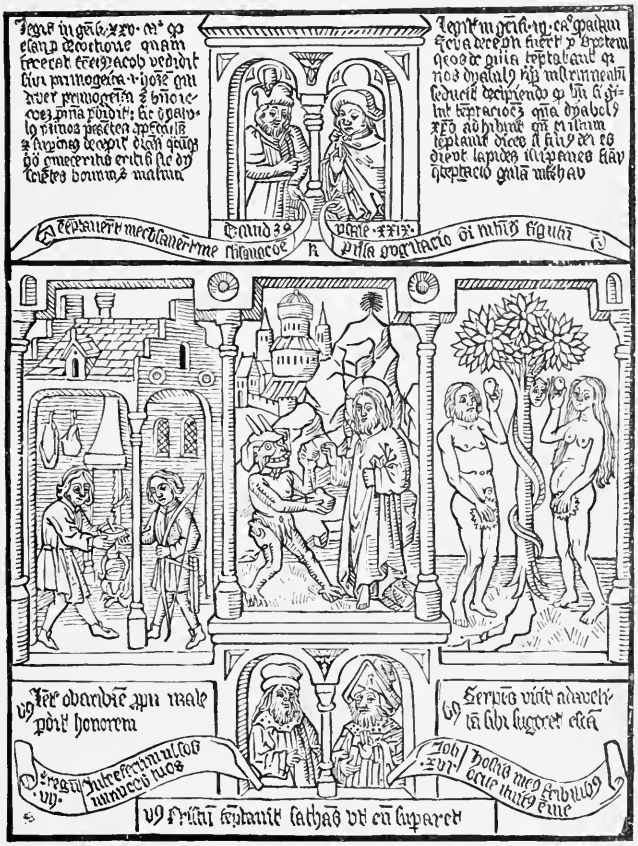
The most celebrated of them are:

I. **Biblia Pauperum.**—Bible of the Poor.
II. **Apocalypsis Sancti Johannis.**—Visions of St. John.
III. **Ars Moriendi.**—The Art of Dying.
IV. **Canticum Canticorum.**—Solomon's Song.
V. **Ars Memorandi.**—The Art of Remembering.
VI. **Liber Regum.**—Book of Kings.
VII. **Temptationes Daemonis.**—Temptations of a Demon.
VIII. **Endkrist** (only known copy in the Spencer Library).
IX. **Quindecim Signa.**—The Fifteen Signs.
X. **De Generatione Christi.**—Of the Genealogy of Christ.
XI. **Mirabilia Romae.**—The Wonders of Rome.
XII. **Speculum Humanae Salvationis.**—Mirror of Salvation.
XIII. **Die Kunst Ciromantia.**—The Art of Chiromancy.
XIV. **Confessionale.**—Of the Confessional.
XV. **Symbolum Apostolicum.**—Symbols of the Apostles.

and are supposed to have been issued between the years 1420 and 1440. There is no title-page to any of them, and the dates are generally only a matter of conjecture. Probably they were copies of illuminated manuscripts, and were drawn, engraved, and coloured by the monks in their *scriptoria*. Doubtless other books of a similar character may be existing in some of the old monasteries on the Continent at the present day.

The Block Books appear to have been made in Germany and Holland, and the most popular volumes passed through many editions. The earliest specimens are printed in a brown ink similar to that used for distemper drawings. It sometimes happened that the blocks used for a book were afterwards cut up and used over again in a different combination (as noticed by Bradshaw in his 'Memoranda,' No. 3, pp. 5 and 6, and by William Blades, in his 'Pentateuch of Printing,' pp. 12 and 13.) A Block-book edition of the 'Biblia Pauperum,' printed at Zwolle, was cut up, and the pieces used afterwards in a different combination. The same was done with the blocks of the 'Speculum nostrae Salvationis,' which were cut up, and the pieces used again for an edition printed at Utrecht in 1481. This was a step in the development of the art of printing.

Biblia Pauperum.—In the Print Room of the British Museum there is a very fine copy of this work, probably the first edition. It is a small folio consisting of forty leaves impressed on one side only of the paper, in pale-brown ink or distemper, by means of friction, probably by a *frotton* or roller, as we can tell by the glazed surface on the back. The right order of the pages is indicated by the letters a, b, c, &c., on the face of the prints, each of which is about ten inches in height by seven and a-half in breadth. On the upper part of each page are frequently two half-length figures and two on the lower, intended for portraits of the prophets



BIBLIA PAUPERUM—TENTH PAGE

(*Reduced from* 10 *in. by* 7½ *in.*)

and other holy men whose writings are cited in the Latin text. The middle part of the page consists of three compartments, each of which is occupied by a subject from the Old or New Testament. The greater part of the text is at the sides of the upper portraits. On each side of those below is frequently a rhyming Latin verse. Texts of Scripture also appear on scrolls. The illustration, which is a much reduced copy of the tenth page (ƙ), will afford a better idea of the arrangement of the subject and of the texts than any more lengthened description.

The picture in the middle represents the Temptation of Christ by the Devil; that on the right, the Temptation of Adam by Eve; and that on the left, Esau selling his birthright for a Mess of Pottage, which his Brother Jacob has evidently just cooked in the iron pot suspended over the fire on a ratchet in the chimney-breast. The ham and goat's flesh or venison hanging on the kitchen wall remind us of the Dutch paintings of two centuries later. Esau's bow and quiver will be seen to be of a very primitive character.

On the thirty-second page (to give another example) we find in the middle compartment Christ appearing to His Disciples; on the left, Joseph discovering himself to his Brethren; and on the right, the Return of the Prodigal Son.

At the bottom of the page are these rhyming Latin verses:—

Under Joseph and his Brethren.	*Under the Return of the Prodigal Son.*
Quos vex(av)it pridem	Fleus amplexatur
Blanditur fratribus idem.	Natum pater ac recreatur.

Hic ihesus apparet: surgentis gloria claret.

Which have been roughly translated:

Whom he so lately vexed	The wept-one is embraced
He charms as brother next.	And as a son replaced,

Here doth Christ appear, in rising glory clear.

JACOB AND ESAU — BIBLIA PAUPERUM

In imitation of the original cut

The 'Biblia Pauperum,' although it could not be read by the laity, was evidently issued for their especial benefit, and, with the help of the priests, it afforded excellent lessons in Bible history. It is believed that the first copies were printed at Haarlem about A.D. 1430 to 1440.

Five editions of the 'Biblia Pauperum' are known as block books with the text in Latin; two with the text in German; and several others were printed about 1475 with the text in movable type. At least three editions were printed in Holland, and seven or eight others appear to be of German origin; the earlier are of the Dutch School. There are four copies, differing editions, in the British Museum, one in the Bodleian Library, and one in the Spencer Library. Some of the copies are coloured in a very simple manner.

Apocalypsis Sancti Johannis.—This work consists of forty-eight pages of woodcuts about ten and a-half inches high by seven and a-half broad, printed in ink or distemper of a greyish-brown tint on thick paper on one side only. Each page is equally divided into two subjects, taken from the Apocalypse, one above the other. The cuts are engraved in the simplest manner, without any attempt at shading, as will be seen on examination of our print, which forms the first page of the book. In the upper half St. John is addressing three men and one woman. The words in the label **Conversi ab idolis per predicationem beati Johannis Drusiana et ceteri** are literally 'Drusiana and the others are converted from idols by the preaching of the blessed John.' The letter **a** indicates page 1. In the lower half we see St. John baptizing Drusiana in a very small font in a small chapel; outside are six ill-looking men trying to peep in through the chinks of the door. Over the chapel are the words **Sanctus Johannes baptisans**, and over the men **Cultores ydolorum explorantes facta ejus**, literally, 'Worshippers of Idols spying on his acts.' Two of the idolaters

APOCALYPSIS SANCTI JOHANNIS
One of the earliest of the Block Books

are armed with hatchets, as if they intended to break open the door. [The Latin words, in accordance with the usual practice of the monks, are contracted in a manner very puzzling to those unused to these mediæval writings.] There are several editions of the Apocalypsis, all apparently of German origin.

Many bibliographers, treating of block books and arguing from the very simple style of the drawings and engravings, consider that the 'Apocalypsis' was the first that was produced. Many worse woodcuts were issued in the eighteenth century. It would be very hazardous indeed to fix a date by the quality of woodcut illustrations.

In order to assist our readers in reading the text printed with the early woodcuts, we give them a key to the most usual abbreviations of Monkish Latin.

1. A right line, thus (—), and a curve, thus (~), placed horizontally over a letter, denote: (—) 1st, over a vowel in the middle or end of a word, that *one letter* is wanting, *e.g.* vēdāt=*vendant*, bonū=*bonum*, terrā=*terram*. (~) 2nd, above or through a letter=the omission of *more than one letter*, e.g. aīa=*anima*, aĺr=*aliter*, aĺia=*animalia*, ablaco=*ablatio*, Wintoñ=Wintonia, nob=*nobis*, &c. A straight line through a consonant also denotes the omission of one or more letters, *e.g.* vob=*vobis*, qđ=*quod*, &c.

2. ꝰ=*er*, or *re*, as the sense requires, *e.g.* ꝰra=*terra*, ꝑdictus=predictus, *i.e. prædictus*.

3. The diphthong is sometimes represented thus, terrę or terrę=*terræ*.

4. A straight or curved line through the letter p, thus, p p=*per*, *por*, and *par*. A curved line, thus ꝓ=*pro*.

5. The character ȝ at the end of a word=*us*, omnibȝ=*omnibus*, also *et*, debȝ=*debet*.

6. The figure ꝯ at the end of a word=rum, ras, res, ris, and ram; eoꝯ=*eorum*, libꝯ=*libras* or *libris*, Windesoꝯ=*Windesores*, Alienoꝯ=*Alienoram*, &c.

7. &=*etiam*, q̄=*que*, *quia*, and *quod*; ⁹ at commencement of a word=*com* or *con*; ⁹mitto=*committo*, ⁹victo=*convicto*. This contraction is also printed thus, c̓. c̓c̃=*concordia* or *concessio*. In the middle or end of a word ⁹=*us*, De⁹=*Deus*, reb⁹=*rebus*, Aug⁹ti=*Augusti*; also for os, p⁹=*post*, p⁹t=*post*.

8. In Domesday Book 7=*et*, ẽ=*est*, s̃t=*sunt*, M̃=*manerium*, m°=*modo*, dim̃=*dimidius*, &c.

9. *Est* is sometimes written ÷ ÷.

10. Points or dots after letters often denote contractions, *e.g.* di. et fi.=*dilectus et fidelis*, e. for *est*, plurib.=*pluribus*.

11. ⁊=*et* in later times.

12. A small letter placed over a word denotes an omission—pⁱus=*prius*, tⁱ=*tibi*, q°s=*quos*, qⁱ=*qui*, &c.

13. Xp̃s, Xp̃c, Xp̃o, stand for *Christus* and its different cases. Mẽ=*Marie*.

These are the most common contractions. There are many more, including numerous technical terms, which it would be useless for us to give for our present purpose.

CHAPTER III

THE BLOCK BOOKS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY (continued).

Ars Moriendi.—Of all the block books known to us, this bears the palm for artistic merit. It is probable that the 'Ars Moriendi' is of later date than the block books already described. Mr. George Bullen (Holbein Society, 'Ars Moriendi,' 1881, p. 4) was of opinion that the first edition was printed at Cologne in Germany about the middle of the fifteenth century. Others say that the quarto edition is the earlier. The illustrations belong to the lower Rhenish School, which, about the middle of the fifteenth century, was influenced by the style of Roger van der Weyde, and probably also by the work of some of the pupils of the Van Eycks. There are eleven woodcuts, about eight and a-half inches, by five and a-half inches, without including the frame-lines, printed on separate pages, and thirteen pages of text, all impressed on one side only of the paper. Five of the pictures represent a sick man in bed tempted by devils—I. To Unbelief; II. To Despair and Suicide; III. To Impatience of Good Advice; IV. To Vainglory; and V. To Avarice. In the five opposite pictures the sick man is attended by Good Angels, who refute the arguments of the demons. In the eleventh print we witness the death of the sick man. The drawings are somewhat similar in manner to the works of Roger van der Weyde, who lived in the early part of the fifteenth century.

It was a time when art was beginning to awake from its long sleep, and such works as the 'Ars Moriendi' were far in advance of any we know of belonging to the previous century.

One of the best of the illustrations is from the last temptation: *temptacio diaboli de avaricia*, and is probably intended to be the presentation of a dream. The sick man's bed is on the roof of his house! A diabolus, as tall as the house, points to a youth—possibly the heir, who is leading a very Flemish-looking horse into a doorway—and says, **Intende thesauro**—take care of your treasures. The figures by the bedside must represent the father and mother, wife, sisters, and young son of the dying man. The diabolus on his right says **Prohideas amicis**—'You may provide for your friends.' The heads of the diaboli in this print are more laughable than terrible, and suggest the make-up of a pantomime rather than the demons who are messengers of the Evil One. On the next page an angel gives good counsel to the dying man, a figure of Christ on the cross is at his bed's head, and the Mother of Christ blesses him. A group of relations and friends still attend him, and beside them are sheep and oxen. In the foreground an angel is driving away a man and woman, who are evidently in great grief, and a crouching demon says, **Quid faciam**—'What can I do?' Pictures like this appealed forcibly to the minds of the laity in the middle ages, and were doubtless fully explained to the uneducated by the religious dwellers in the monasteries and convents which at that time abounded throughout Europe.

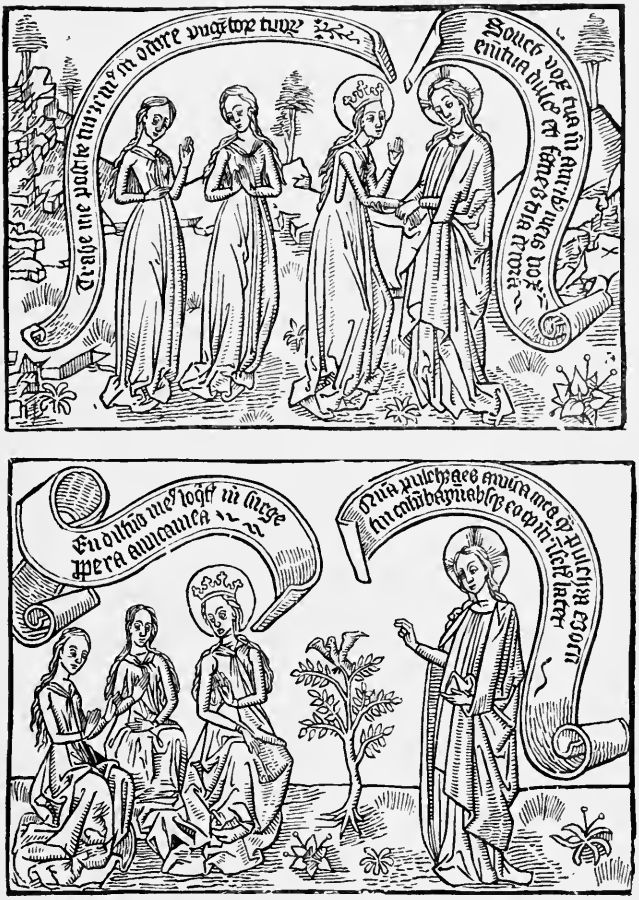
A reproduction of this book was issued a few years since by the Holbein Society. The designs were copied in careful pen-and-ink drawings by Mr. F. Price, and the text was translated and the pictures described by Mr. George Bullen, who also wrote a learned preface, enumerating the various editions of the book which are known to have been printed in different languages. Weigel printed a photographic reproduction of this book in 1869.

The 'Ars Moriendi' was the most popular of all the block books. Before the end of the fifteenth century eight different editions had been issued, seven of them in Latin and one in French. M. Passavant states that he had met with thirty different imitations of it issued in Germany and Holland.

There is but one quite perfect copy of the first edition of this book known, and this fortunately is in the British Museum. It was bought at the Weigel sale in Leipsic in 1872 for the large sum of £1,072 10*s.*, exclusive of commission.

Canticum Canticorum.—The Church's Love unto Christ prefigured in 'The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.' This is a much more pleasing book than the 'Apocalypsis.' The figures are more gracefully designed and the engraver has shown much more knowledge of his art; the indications of shading are in many instances very happily given. It consists of only sixteen leaves with two subjects, one above the other on each leaf; each picture is five inches high by seven wide, and is printed by means of friction in dark-brown ink or distemper, on thick paper.

Our illustration is from the second leaf. In the upper subject we see the Bride and Bridegroom conversing, two maidens attending. The words on the scroll on the left are **Trahe me: post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum,** 'Draw me, we will run after thee: because of the savour of thy good ointments' (Song of Solomon, ch. i., v. 4 and 3). On the scroll to the right, **Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis et facies tua decora,** 'Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely' (Song of Solomon, ch. ii., verse 14). In the lower subject, in which the Bride is seen seated by her maidens and the Bridegroom is standing near, on the left-hand scroll we read, **En dilectus meus loquitur mihi, Surge, propera, amica mea,** 'My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away' (ch. ii., verse 10); and on the right, **Quam pulchra es amica mea, quam pulchra es! oculi tui**


Trahe me post te curremus in odore unguentorum tuorum
Sonet vox tua in auribus meis vox enim tua dulcis et facies tua decora
Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat
Nigra sum sed formosa filie jerusalem

CANTICUM CANTICORUM—SECOND LEAF
(*Much reduced*)

columbarum, absque eo quod intrinsecus latet, 'How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou! thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within' (ch. iv. 1).

On the sixth leaf, the Bride and Bridegroom are eating grapes in a vineyard, three maidens attending, all seated. In the cut below, the Bridegroom is standing outside a garden wall over which the Bride is watching him. An angel is entering the gate, other angels with drawn swords are on the wall.

It is supposed that these engravings were executed in the Netherlands: the female figures are said to be in the costume of the Court of Burgundy! There are several shields of arms to be found in three of the subjects, and these have given rise to long dissertations by writers on heraldry. Mr. Chatto's book has engravings of eighteen of them with descriptions. One is the shield of Alsace, another of the house of Würtemberg, a third of the city of Ratisbon; and the cross-keys, the *fleur-de-lis*, the black spread-eagle, and a rose (much like our Tudor rose), may be seen on others. Several copies of the 'Canticum' have been found, coloured and uncoloured. Two editions of the Canticum Canticorum are known; both appear to have emanated from Holland and the Low Countries, and both bear clear traces of the influence of the school of the Van Eycks.

The Figure Alphabet.—In the Print Room of the British Museum there is a curious little book (six inches by four inches in size) in which nearly all the letters of the alphabet are formed by grotesque figures of men. Except that it was bequeathed to the Museum by Sir George Beaumont, no one knows anything of its history; but internal evidence warrants us in attributing it to the work of an engraver of the first half of the fifteenth century. The cuts are printed in a kind of sepia-coloured distemper which can be easily wiped off by means of moisture. There is one very curious thing connected with this work. In the cut forming the

letter L a young man is leaning on a sword, on the blade of which is plainly written London, and on the cloak of the youth lying below we read, in a current hand usual at that date, the word *Bethemsted*. The figures, grotesque as they are, were drawn by a better artist than those who designed the block books. We know that the art of engraving was in a very low state in England at the time we are speaking of; we should therefore rejoice if we could anyhow prove that these very early specimens of wood-cutting were done in this country.

In the letter F, which we have given as an illustration, very much reduced from the original, a tall man is blowing a very long trumpet; a youth, bending down to form the crotch of the letter, is beating a tabor; while a nondescript animal lies couched at his feet.

Many other block books exist in the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the Spencer Library, Manchester, and in the large libraries on the Continent besides those we have mentioned. Some were printed, long after the introduction of printing, in Venice and in the cities of Lower Germany.

Before the beginning of the fifteenth century we have no record of any examples of wood-engraving of an artistic kind, except, as we have said, the designs on playing-cards, and the workmanship of these, whether it was by woodcuts or by a stencil-plate, was very crude. The art really came into existence in the first quarter of that famous fifteenth century. There were scores of men at that time who could carve excellently well in stone or wood, or who could design

and make beautiful jewels, and some of these men, probably monks in their monasteries, as well as secular craftsmen, drew and cut the first wood-engraving. No one knows who they were.

Up to the year 1475 the original method of wood-cutting changed very little; nearly every print was in outline with a thick and a thin line. A few, such as those in the 'Ars Moriendi,' had a little shading of the most primitive kind. They were intended to be coloured, and, among the prints that have been preserved, experts say they can detect the manner of colouring prevalent in Upper or Lower Germany, the Rhine Provinces, or the Netherlands. Towards the end of the century came a transition. Shading was introduced and even cross-hatching was executed by the best wood-engravers of the time. The art took, as it were, a sudden bound, and in a few years attained a height which we at the end of the nineteenth century find it hard to excel. But of this we must speak in a future chapter.

Ars Memorandi.—This very curious book—much more curious than beautiful—contains fifteen designs and the same number of pages of engraved text. The designs are intended to assist the memory in reading the Gospels, and perhaps to assist the friars in preaching to the people. To the Gospel of St. John, with which the book begins, there are three cuts allotted, and as many pages of text; to St. Matthew five cuts and five pages of text; to St. Mark, three cuts and three pages of text; and to St. Luke, four cuts and four pages of text.

In every print an allegorical figure is represented; an eagle symbolical of St. John, an angel of St. Matthew, a lion of St. Mark, and an ox of St. Luke.

The first cut is intended to represent, figuratively, the first six chapters of St. John's Gospel. An upright eagle, with spread wings and claws, has three human heads—that of the Saint with a dove above it is in the middle, the head

of Christ is on its right, and that of Moses on its left. A lute, from which three bells depend, lies across the eagle's breast; this is supposed to refer to the Marriage in Cana, and a little numeral tells us that the account of it is in the second chapter. Between the outspread claws is a bucket surmounted by a crown. These are symbolical of the Well of Samaria and the Nobleman's son at Capernaum in chapter iv. On the bend of the eagle's outspread right wing is a fish and the numeral 5, referring to the Pool of Bethesda in chapter v., and on the left wing are five barley loaves and two small fishes, and a small 6, referring to the parable of the loaves and fishes in the sixth chapter. This very singular book must have been a great favourite with the priests, and perhaps with the laity, for it was reprinted over and over again. It appears to have been of German origin.

Of the other block books mentioned in chapter ii. it would be tedious to give an account; they are very similar to those we have just described.

CHAPTER IV

SPECULUM HUMANÆ SALVATIONIS

Historians tell us that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the cities of the Netherlands were the most populous and the richest in all Western Europe. Bruges, Ghent, Liège and Brussels by their manufactures, and Antwerp by her commerce, in which she rivalled Venice, had become celebrated for their great wealth, the grandeur of their rulers, and the magnificence of their great Guilds. The more northern towns, too, Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Utrecht, and many cities of Germany, such as Mentz, Cologne, Strasburg, Nürnberg, Augsburg, and Basel, were rich and prosperous. It was among these cities that the sister arts of printing and wood-engraving first flourished.

From undoubted evidence accumulated by the patience and labour of many bibliographers, it appears that the art of printing by means of movable type was not invented by any one man, but was the result of a gradual development of the art of engraving. In the fifteenth century, as in the nineteenth, there was an ever-growing demand for school books. One of the most popular of these in the fifteenth century was the 'Donatus,' a grammar so called from the name of the author. There was also a Latin Delectus called a 'Catho.' These were cheap books and were usually printed from engraved wood blocks. These and the block books already described were contemporary, and the immediate forerunners of separate types. (See Blades, 'Pentateuch of Printing,' p. 12.)

In certain editions of the 'Speculum' there are to be seen woodcuts printed in ink of one colour and text in ink of another colour, from metal movable types. These types are rude in the extreme, far more so than the German Indulgence of 1454, the very earliest known dated piece of printing. There is no doubt that the Donatuses were at first printed from wood blocks, both in Germany and the Low Countries, but there is not a single Dutch block-book Donatus known, while there are some nineteen or twenty early type-printed Dutch Donatuses already catalogued. Therefore it appears likely that Gutenberg simply developed the process which had already been for some time in use in the Low Countries for Donatuses and similar books.

FIRST PAGE OF THE SPECULUM HUMANÆ SALVATIONIS

The first book of importance that was printed at a press

and from movable type was the celebrated Bible[1] which Gutenberg produced at Mentz about the year 1455. About the same time it is asserted that Laurent Janszoon Coster of Haarlem issued the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, and much discussion has risen as to which book has the prior claim. The Dutch insist on Coster as being the proto-printer; the Germans not only assert the claim of Gutenberg but say that Coster is a myth! The controversy is still carried on and there is little likelihood that it will ever be decided.

In the year 1462 there was a small revolution in Mentz, owing to the rival claims of two Archbishops, and the city was sacked. The printers in the employment of Gutenberg and his partners, Fust and Peter Schoeffer, were scattered in every direction. Fifteen years afterwards printing-presses were to be found in every large city of Germany and the Netherlands, as well as in Italy and France; and about 1477, Caxton set up his first press in the precincts of Westminster Abbey.

Speculum Humanæ Salvationis—'The Mirror of Man's Salvation.'—This was the first book, printed from type, that had wood engravings. It is a small folio containing fifty-eight cuts, each of which is divided into two subjects, inclosed in an architectural frame, in which is the title in Latin. The cuts are placed at the head of the pages, of which they occupy one-third. It is to be noticed that, though the cuts are all printed in brown ink, the text beneath them is printed in black: probably because the prints were to be coloured.

The arrangement and scope of this work are much like those of the 'Biblia Pauperum'; the subjects are taken from the Old and New Testaments, including the Apocrypha, and a few are from classic history.

The illustrations are from the first page: **Casus Lucifer**

[1] It is often called the Mazarine Bible, because a copy was discovered, with notes written in it by the illuminator, in the library of Cardinal Mazarin. It is very scarce. In 1884 Mr. Quaritch bought a very fine copy from the library of Sir John Thorold, for which he paid £3,900.

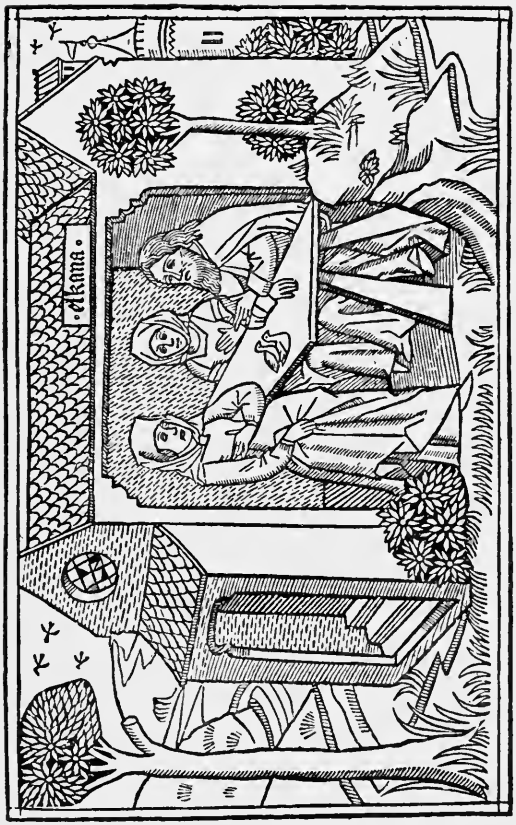
—'The Fall of Lucifer'—and **Deus creabit hominem ad ymaginem et similitudinem suam**—'God created Man after His own image and likeness.'

SPECULUM: THE FALL OF LUCIFER
(*Size of the original cut*)

We see that the arts of drawing and engraving had improved since the time of the 'Biblia Pauperum.' The figures are in better proportion: in many of the designs the folds of the dress fall more gracefully and the shading is more artistically done. There are four fifteenth-century editions of this work known, two with the text in Dutch, and two in Latin. Three editions are printed entirely with movable type, while part of the fourth—the second Latin edition—is certainly from engraved blocks. No one can tell the reason of this curious anomaly—we can only conjecture. Experts tell the various editions by the state of the cuts; when these are unblemished, it is assumed that they are of the first edition; when a few of the lines of the cuts are broken, it is supposed that they belong to the second edition; when many are broken, to the third edition, and so on.

Mr. Woodbery[1] has so graphically described the 'Speculum' that we cannot do better than quote his words: 'A whole series needs to be looked at before one can appreciate the interest which these designs have in indicating the subjects on which imagination and thought were then exercised, and the modes in which they were exercised. Symbolism and mysticism pervade the whole. All nature and history seem to have existed only to prefigure the life of the Saviour: imagination and thought hover about Him, and take colour, shape, and light only from that central form; the stories of the Old Testament, the histories of David, Samson, and Jonah, the massacres, victories, and miracles there recorded, foreshadow, as it were in parables, the narrative of the Gospels; the temple, the altar, and the ark of the covenant, all the furnishings and observances of the Jewish ritual, reveal occult meanings; the garden of Solomon's Song, and the sentiment of the Bridegroom and the Bride who wander in it, are interpreted, sometimes in graceful or even poetic feeling, under the inspiration of mystical devotion; old kings of pagan Athens are transformed into witnesses of Christ,

[1] *History of Wood-Engraving*, 1883.



THE GRIEF OF HANNAH
(*From the Cologne Bible*)

and, with the Sibyl of Rome, attest spiritual truth. This book and others like it are mirrors of the ecclesiastical mind; they picture the principal intellectual life of the Middle Ages; they show the sources of that deep feeling in the earlier Dutch artists which gave dignity and sweetness to their works. Even in the rudeness of these books, in the texts as well as in the designs, there is a *naïveté*, an openness and freshness of nature, a confidence in limited experience and contracted vision, which make the sight of these cuts as charming as conversation with one who had never heard of America or dreamed of Luther, and who would have found modern life a puzzle and an offence. The author of the *Speculum* laments the evils which fell upon man in consequence of Adam's sin, and recounts them: blindness, deafness, lameness, floods, fire, pestilence, wild beasts, and law-suits (in such order he arranges them); and he ends the long list with this last and heaviest evil, that men should presume to ask "why God willed to create man, whose fall He foresaw; why He willed to create the angels, whose ruin He foreknew; wherefore He hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and softened the heart of Mary Magdalene unto repentance; wherefore He made Peter contrite, who had denied Him thrice, but allowed Judas to despair in his sin; wherefore He gave grace to one thief, and cared not to give grace to his companion." What modern man can fully realise the mental condition of this poet, who thus weeps over the temptation to ask these questions, as the supreme and direst curse which Divine vengeance allows to overtake the perverse children of this world?'

By far the most excellent book issued about this time is **The Psalter**, printed by Gutenberg's former partners, Fust and Schoeffer, at Mentz in 1459. The initial letters, which are printed in red and blue and the Gothic type, all of which are in exact imitation of the best manuscripts, could not be excelled at the present day. The book belongs more to the

FRONTISPIECE TO BREYDENBACH'S TRAVELS
(*Much reduced*)

History of Printing, but on account of its beautiful initial letters, which, it is said, were drawn and engraved by Schoeffer, we feel constrained to notice it.

A **Book of Fables** issued from the press of Albrecht Pfister, of Bamberg, in 1461, may be mentioned as a very early work in which woodcuts and type were printed together; it is a small folio of twenty-eight leaves, containing eighty-five fables in rhyme in the old German language, illustrated with a hundred and one cuts. They are of little merit and show no advancement in the art of wood-engraving. The only known copy of this book, which is in the Wolfenbüttel Library, was taken away by the French under Napoleon's orders and added to the Bibliothèque Nationale; it was restored at the surrender of Paris in 1815.

We cannot give a list of all the books containing woodcuts that were issued in Germany at the end of the fifteenth century; their name is legion. We must, however, mention two or three of the most important.

In the **Cologne Bible**, printed about the year 1475, there are one hundred and nine cuts, one of which we give as an example; they are about equal in merit to those in the 'Biblia Pauperum,' but show no improvement. The subject of the cut is 'The Grief of Hannah.' We see Elkanah and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, in a room from which the artist has obligingly taken away one of the sides. In the Nürnberg Bible, printed in 1482, we find the same set of cuts.

The **Nürnberg Chronicle**, often quoted as an example of early German wood-engraving, is a folio volume containing more than two thousand cuts, which include views of cities, portraits of saints and other holy men, scenes from Biblical and profane history, and a great many other subjects, produced, we are told, under the superintendence of Michael Wolgemuth and William Pleydenwurff, 'mathematical men skilled in the art of painting.' The same head does duty for the portrait of a dozen or more historians or poets—the

same portrait is given to many military heroes—the saints are treated in the same way, and even the same view serves for several different cities. The cuts are bolder and more full of colour than any we have had before, and so far may be said to be in advance, and this we must put down to the superintendence of Wolgemuth, who was an artist of repute. Chatto says they are the most tasteless and worthless things that are to be found in any book, ancient or modern—but this is too sweeping an assertion. The work was compiled by Hartman Schedel, a physician of Nürnberg, and printed in that city by Anthony Koburger in 1493.

The most important book of this time, so far as the woodcuts are concerned, is a Latin edition of **Breydenbach's Travels**, which was printed in folio by Erhard Reuwich in Mentz in 1486. We give a much reduced copy of the frontispiece, which is without doubt the best example of wood-engraving of the fifteenth century. In this cut we see for the first time cross-hatching used in the shadows, in the folds of the drapery of the principal figure—Saint Catherine, who is the patroness of learned men—in the upper parts of the shields and beneath the top part of the frame. Bernard de Breydenbach, who was a canon of the cathedral of Mentz, was accompanied in his travels to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and the shrine of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai by John, Count of Solms and Lord of Mintzenberg, and Philip de Bicken, Knight. The arms of the three travellers are given in the cut with the names beneath them. Besides the frontispiece there are many other good engravings in this volume—a picture of Venice, five feet long and ten inches high; views of Corfu, Modon, in Southern Greece, and the country round Jerusalem. There are also many pictures of animals, such as a giraffe, a unicorn, a salamander, a camel, and a creature something like an ouran-outang. Travellers saw wonderful things in those days! It is a great pity that we do not know the names of the artists.

who drew and engraved the cuts in this most interesting book.

Just at the close of the century we find the first humorous conception of German artists in the illustrations of the **Navis Stultifera** (Ship of Fools), written by Sebastian Brandt and

THE BIBLIOMANIAC

From 'Navis Stultifera' (The Ship of Fools)

printed at Basel in 1497. This very bold and original work had an immense success and was frequently reprinted. Every page is adorned with the antics of clowns and men in fools' caps and bells, in caricature of some absurdity, and the bibliomaniac is not spared: 'I have the first place among fools,' he is made to say; 'I have heaps of books which I

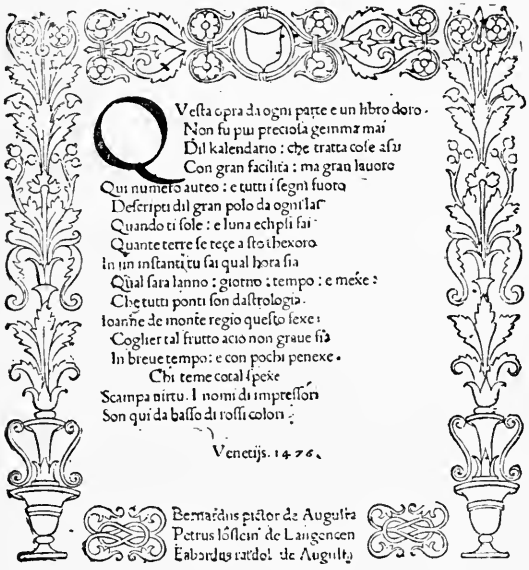
rarely open. If I read them I forget them and am no wiser.' As will be seen by the cut, though the perspective of the draughtsman is not to be praised, the work of the engraver is excellent; the fineness of the lines is new to us and the shadows are well treated. Notice also the bindings of the books, with their bosses, hinges, and clasps; nearly all are folios, and four or five are ornamented with the same pattern. The decoration at the side is evidently copied from an illuminated manuscript. With this book we may fitly close our notice of German wood-engraving of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER V

ON WOOD-ENGRAVING IN ITALY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

ALTHOUGH at this time Germany took the lead of all European countries so far as the illustrations of printed books are concerned, the transition from German to Italian art is like the change from the strong bleak winds of the North to the balmy air and sunny skies of the South. We are aware of the difference both of climate and of art in a moment: the very first picture presented to us reveals it. The Italians of the fifteenth century could not take up a handicraft without making it a fine art. Here is a title-page of a folio KALENDARIO produced in Venice in the year 1476. This is the first title-page on which the contents of the book, the name of the author, the imprint of the publishers, who were also the printers, and the date of the issue of the book, were ever given. Mark the decoration. Though the publishers were Germans, the artist who drew this border must have been an Italian; and probably the engraver was an Italian also, for the book was produced at Venice. The character of the design suggests the work of an illuminator. The introduction of the printing-press must have interfered sadly with the writer of manuscripts and his brother the illuminator, and both were doubtless glad to avail themselves of the new art. The manuscript writer may have turned compositor, and the illuminator may have been transformed into a book decorator.

We have before us a facsimile of a cut called 'The Triumph of Love,' which appeared as one of the illustrations of TRIUMPHI DEL PETRARCA, a book printed in Venice, in 1488. A man, seated with his hands bound behind him, is tied with a rope to a triumphal car which is drawn by four


Veſta opra da ogni parte e un libro doro
Non fu piu preciola gemma mai
Dil kalendario : che tratta coſe aſu
Con gran facilità : ma gran lauoro
Qui numero aureo : e tutti i ſegni fuoro
Deſcripti dil gran polo da ogni lat
Quando ti ſole : e luna echpſi fai
Quante terre ſe teçe a ſto thexoro
In un inſtanti tu ſai qual hora ſia
Qual ſara lanno : giorno : tempo : e meſe :
Che tutti ponti ſon daſtrologia.
Ioanne de monte regio queſto texe :
Coglier tal frutto acio non graue ſia
In breue tempo : e con pochi penexe.
Chi teme cotal ſpeſe
Scampa uirtu. I nomi di impreſſori
Son qui da baſſo di roſſi colori
Venetijs. 1476.
Bernardus pictor de Augusta
Petrus löslein de Langencen
Erhardus ratdol de Augusta

TITLE-PAGE OF A FOLIO KALENDARIO BY JOANNE DE MONTE REGIO, PRINTED AT VENICE IN 1476 (*much reduced*)

horses; on a ball of fire, which rises from the car, a blindfolded Cupid is shooting an arrow (apparently at the near leader); a great crowd of men and women, among whom we see a king and a mitred bishop, follow and surround the car, and on a distant hill we behold Petrarch conversing with his friend. There are two rabbits feeding calmly in the fore-

ground, notwithstanding the danger of the horses' hoofs, and the usual conventional designs for grass and flowers. The groundwork of the border of this curious print is black, with an Italian design carefully cut out in white, with but little shadow. From the waviness of many of the lines which should be straight, we think this print must be from an engraving on metal.

Of all the wood-engravings executed in Italy in the fifteenth century, none can compare in excellence with those in the HYPNEROTOMACHIA POLIPHILI (Dream of Poliphilo) printed in Venice, by Aldus, in 1499.[1] There are, in all, one hundred and ninety-two subjects, of which eighty-six relate to mythology and ancient history, fifty-four are pictures of processions and emblematic figures, thirty-six are architectural and ornamental, and sixteen vases and statues. They have been attributed to many different artists, the most probable of whom is Carpaccio. The subject of the 'Hypnerotomachia' has been described as a 'Contest between Imagination and Love'; it is a curious medley of all kinds of fable, history, architecture, mathematics, and other matters, seasoned with suggestions which do not reflect credit on the moral perceptions of its author, a Dominican monk, named Francesco Colonna. An enthusiastic admirer of this book thus poetically describes it: 'There is, perhaps, no volume where the exuberant vigour of that age is more clearly shown, or where the objects for which that age was impassioned are more glowingly described. The romantic and fantastic rhapsody mirrors every aspect of nature and art

[1] An English version, neither faithful nor complete, was published in the time of Queen Elizabeth, '*At London, Printed for Simon Waterson, and are to be sold at his shop in St. Paule's Churchyard at Chepegate*, 1592.' It is extremely scarce. Many of the pages, as giving examples of costume, have lately been reprinted by authority of the Science and Art Department.

There is a French edition of Poliphilo, printed at Paris by Kerver in 1561, with illustrations in a late florid French style.

in which the Italians then took delight—peaceful landscape, where rivers flow by flower-starred banks and through bird-haunted woods; noble architecture and exquisite sculpture;

POLIPHILO IN THE GARDEN

From 'Hypnerotomachia Poliphili,' printed by Aldus at Venice in 1499

the music of soft instruments, the ruins of antiquity, the legends of old mythology, the motions of the dance, the elegance of the banquet, splendour of apparel, courtesy of manners, even the manuscript, with its cover of purple velvet sown with Eastern pearls—everything that was cared for and sought in that time when the gloom of asceticism lifted and disclosed the wide prospect of the world lying, as it were, in the loveliness of daybreak.' But it is more on account of the beauty of the cuts than the poetry of the author that this book has been so much admired and so frequently reprinted. Our illustration shows us where Poliphilo in his dream visits a bevy of fair maidens in a garden. These nymphs are not very beautiful, but, though they have such high waists, remark how gracefully their figures are drawn, and look at the action and the drapery of the damsel running away. The engraving is, without doubt, an exact facsimile of the artist's drawing; the lines are clear and crisp, and are evidently the work of a practised hand. The drawing of the gateway and trees is simply conventional. We are sorry that we have not room for more of the illustrations of this remarkable work.

In these early books it seems to have been nobody's business to record the name of the engraver who produced the illustrations, and, although the printer's name is generally very conspicuous in the colophon, the artist's name rarely, if ever, appears. But the work of certain masters of certain schools is generally recognised with ease, either by some peculiarity of manner, or by some particular mark. Thus one artist, who, towards the end of the fifteenth century, illustrated a few books printed in Italy, is known as 'the master of the dolphin,' because in most of his work this fish appears among the decorations. Another is known to us only by the name of 'the illustrator of the "Poliphilus,"' that quaint romance of Colonna which has taken a proud place in literature, not for its own intrinsic merits, but

rather on account of the beauty of its woodcuts, the name of whose author is still a matter of conjecture.

We may here say a few words about Aldo Manuzio, better known in England by his Latinised name, Aldus Manutius, the celebrated printer, and some of the other early printers of Venice. One of the first to set up a press in Venice was Nicolas Jenson, a Frenchman, who had worked at Mentz, and who was the first to cut and introduce Roman type such as is now in use. At his death his business and plant were bought by a rich man, Andrea Torresano, of Asola, and the work was carried on successfully. Aldo Manuzio, who was born at Sermoneta, a village near Velletri, in 1450, received an excellent education, especially in Greek; and the celebrated Pico da Mirandola made him tutor to his nephews, Alberto and Leonardo Pio, Lords of Carpi. Alberto Pio, under his master's training, became a great lover of literature; and when Aldo conceived the idea of starting a printing-press, the young lord advanced him the necessary funds, and gave him a house in Venice near the Church of Sant' Agostino. Aldo then married a daughter of Torresano, and the two printing businesses were joined and carried on together under Aldo's direction. His house, we are told, was a veritable colony; besides the compositors' rooms and the press-rooms, he had closets for press-readers and studios for the special use of learned authors. The first 'printer's devil' was a little negro boy who had been brought by one of the men from Greece.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the wood-engravers of Florence were celebrated for beautiful book illustrations in a distinct style. Those in the QUATRO REGGIE, Florence, 1508, are typical examples; their chief characteristics are, great breadth; masses of white and black

evenly balanced; and the frequent use of white lines out of masses of black.

TEOBALDO MANUZIO—KNOWN AS ALDUS, PRINTER AT VENICE

Some of the fine borders to these early Italian wood-engravings owe their distinctive character to earlier work of

engravers on metal. Thus the borders round the illustrations of the Venice folio of 1491 of the TRIUMPHS OF PETRARCH seem to be direct copies of engravings in metal by Filippo Lippi. The masses of white on a black background are very effective, and the strength of the colour increases the effect of the picture which the border surrounds.

Between 1474 and 1512 Aldus printed for the first time the works of thirty-three Greek authors. The works of Aristotle, brought out in four volumes, occupied three years. A learned Greek, Musurus of Crete, corrected the proofs, in which Aldus himself assisted. The workmen were nearly all Greeks. The Greek type was copied from the handwriting of Musurus, and the Italian, known as the Aldine, from the writings of Petrarch; this was cut by the celebrated artist-goldsmith, Francia of Bologna. The Aldine edition of Virgil (1501), now exceedingly rare, was the first book printed in this Italic type. Notwithstanding all his learning, energy, and philanthropy, Aldus did not succeed in his business. Many of his books were pirated, wars and insurrections interrupted him, the League of Cambray caused him to close his works from 1506 to 1510, and he sold his books at a rate too cheap to be remunerative.

The first printed edition of ÆSOP'S FABLES, which appeared at Verona as early as 1481, and was reprinted at Venice in 1491, contains many excellent engravings inclosed in ornamental borders, thoroughly Italian in character. The figures are not unlike those in the 'Hypnerotomachia,' and we can readily imagine that they were drawn by the same artist, who has given us little more than outlines, which the engraver has well cut in facsimile. The fable of 'The Jackdaw and the Peacock' is particularly well done. An edition of OVID'S METAMORPHOSES appeared also at this time with tolerably good illustrations not so well engraved.

There are some curious little cuts in the EPISTOLE DI SAN HIERONYMO VOLGARE, published in Ferrara in 1497, which

are more valuable for their originality than their beauty, either of drawing or engraving. The book was evidently intended for the use of the illiterate, to whom the quality of the pictures laid before them was of little consequence if they told the story that was meant for them to read with their eyes. The homely scene of Christ appearing like a Gardener with a hoe on His shoulder, addressing Mary Magdalene in

A BOOTMAKER'S SHOP
From the 'Decameron,' printed in Venice in 1492

an Italian *pergola*, would appeal to their feelings much more directly than the Transfiguration of Raphael.

We do not find record of any other important wood-engravings in the history of printing in Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. Presses abounded everywhere, chiefly managed by Germans; there was scarcely an important town in Italy without a printer; few illustrated books, however, were issued at this time. An edition of Boccaccio's

'DECAMERON,' with many excellent cuts, one of which, representing a bootmaker's shop, we give as an illustration, was printed by the brothers Gregorio at Venice in 1492. And there are some illustrations in a book called 'FIORE DI VIRTÙ,' which appeared in Venice in the same year, that

FRONTISPIECE TO A 'TERENCE,' PRINTED AT LYONS IN 1493

may be praised for the work of the wood-engraver, though the designer shows a sad ignorance of the laws of perspective and proportion. And we have before us an illustration to a poem by POLIZIANO, in which Giuliano dei Medici is kneeling before the altar of the goddess Minerva, where we see graceful drawing by the artist and fairly good engraving. It

was printed in Florence, but the type bears no comparison with the beauty of the Aldine books.

The love of colour, which is born in all Italians, led them to develop a process of making pictures in chiaroscuro—by printing several wood-blocks one upon another, each block giving a separate tint. In fact, it was the beginning of the modern colour-printing. The invention of the new process was claimed by Ugo da Carpi, who reproduced several of the designs of Raphael. In the beginning of the next century we find pictures printed in four different colours—trying to imitate water-colour, or, rather, distemper drawings. (See p. 99.)

At Lyons, about the same time, there was an illustrated edition of 'TERENCE' published, with well-executed woodcuts, from which we are able to give only the frontispiece, 'The Author writing his book.' It is sufficient to show that the engraving is the work of a practised hand.

CHAPTER VI

IN FRANCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Before we begin our brief history of wood-engraving in France it will be well to speak of the technical part of the new art in the fifteenth century. We have already stated that the engraving of the 'St. Christopher' and other large prints were cut with a knife on planks of apple or pear or other close-grained wood; but there has always been much doubt about the small book illustrations which appeared in various countries quite at the end of the century. The discovery, however, of some engraved blocks of metal solved the difficulty. In those days workers in metal were to be found in all large towns; the age of moulding and casting everything that could be cast had not then arrived: of course, coins and medals were made in the foundry; but handwork of the most perfect kind on metal was as common as wood-carving for the churches.

Experts have discovered twisted lines in some of the old prints; a line in a woodcut may easily be broken but it can hardly be bent, and it is now asserted that many of the woodcuts, including the beautiful initial letters in Fust and Schoeffer's 'Psalter,' were really engraved on metal. The view of London at the head of the first page of the *Illustrated London News* is, we are told, cut in brass; Mulready's well-known envelope, engraved on brass by the celebrated wood-engraver, John Thompson, may be seen in the South

Kensington Museum; and scores of other examples of metal-work of this kind might be cited. And there is no doubt that the famous illustrations of the Missal, or 'Book of Hours,' issued in Paris between 1490 and 1520, were engraved on metal of some kind, perhaps on copper or some amalgam of tin and copper. There was a metal known as 'latten' in those days, and probably the engraving was done on some material of this kind, not too hard to cut, not too soft to wear

ORNAMENTS FROM 'HEURES A L'USAIGE DE CHARTRE'
(*Published by Vostre*)

away. It will be noticed that the groundwork of many borders in the French books is filled with little white dots, *criblé* it was called; these dots are, in the first place, to imitate similar work in the gold grounds of the borders of illustrated missals, and, in the second place, to save the labour of cutting away so much of the metal as would be required for a white ground. These dots were evidently

made by means of a sharp and finely-pointed tool driven by a blow into the metal. (See page 59.)

France was not early in the field with illustrated books, but she quickly made up for the delay by the excellence of her work, more especially in ornament. In 1488, Pierre Le Rouge, a printer and publisher, sent forth a book, 'La Mer des Histoires,' which contains many charming designs, from which beautiful wall-papers we know of have been borrowed; they are as well engraved as similar work at the present day, and only needed better 'over-laying' by the pressman, an art but little practised at that time. This book contains the first decorative work by wood-engraving we have met with, and shows the great excellence of art in France at this period. There is a good example, though much reduced in size, among the illustrations of Mr. William Morris's paper 'On the Woodcuts of Gothic Books,' that he read before a meeting of the Society of Arts in January 1892: it is printed in the Journal of the Society for February 12th.

Besides Le Rouge, there were in Paris at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries four celebrated printers, who were also publishers, whose books command our attention. Their names are Simon Vostre, Antoine Verard, Thielman Kerver, a German, and Guyot Marchant; they all published the 'Book of Hours,' illustrated and decorated by the best artists and engravers of their time. There was likewise a printer named Philippe Pigouchet, who was also an engraver on wood, and who began by cutting blocks for Simon Vostre, and afterwards turned publisher on his own account. An important point to notice in connection with the illustrations of French 'Books of Hours' at this time is that they are nearly all inspired by German artists and nearly all copied from illuminated MSS.

At the end of the fifteenth century the art of illumination was at its height in Paris. No one excelled the exquisite

THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN
(*From a Missal published by Simon Vostre*)

work of Jean Foucquet, servant to the King, and Jean Perreal, painter to Anne of Brittany. Manuscripts containing their miniature paintings command a large sum whenever they are offered for sale at the present day. These artists, it is said, gave their aid to the publishers of the 'Book of Hours' (*Heures à l'usage de Rome*), which had such an enormous sale that each publisher produced an edition for himself. Mr. Noel Humphreys asserts, in his 'History of the Art of Printing,' that no fewer than sixty editions were published between 1484 and 1494. In his 'Introduction to the Study and Collection of Ancient Prints,' Dr. Willshire says: 'Towards the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries some well-known French printers—Pigouchet, Jean Dupré, Antoine Verard, and Simon Vostre—published some beautiful "Books of Hours," ornamented with engravings having some peculiar characters. The chief of these were that the ground and often the dark portions of the print were finely *criblé* or dotted white, serving as a means of "killing black"—a practice then prevalent among French engravers; secondly, each page of text was surrounded by a border of little subjects engraved in the same manner, and often repeated at every third page. . . . Not unfrequently they were printed in brilliant ink on fine vellum, that they might compete with the illuminated MS. "Books of Hours" then in fashion. The prints decorating these books have been generally considered to be impressions from wood.' But Mr. Linton says they are from engraved blocks of metal; and every practical man will, we are sure, agree with the great living Master of Wood-engraving.

Our first illustration is from a 'Book of Hours,' or Missal, published by Simon Vostre in 1488. It represents 'The Death of the Virgin,' a subject that was always chosen by the illustrator of religious books in those days; in our account of wood-engraving in the next two centuries we shall frequently meet with it among the works of the great artists. The

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

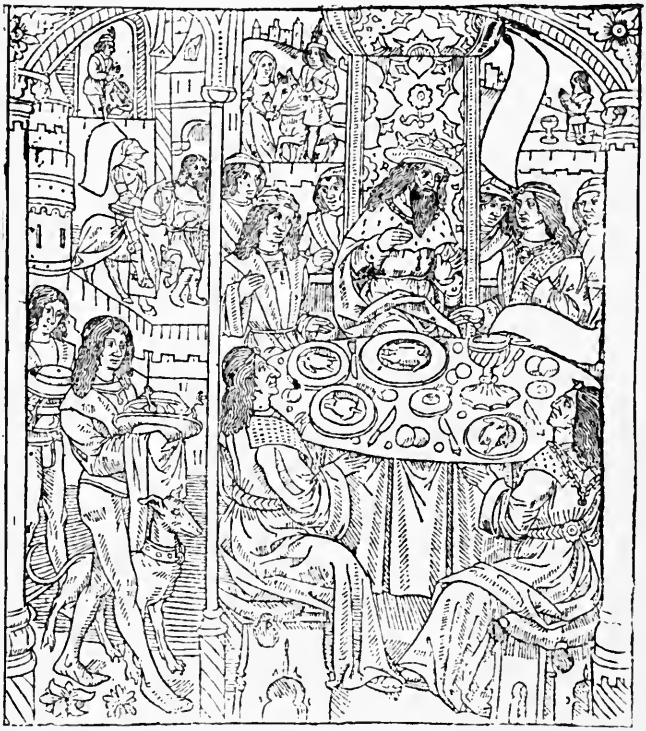
(*After a painting by Martin Schongauer. From a Missal by Simon Vostre*)

Gothic framework of the cut is evidently borrowed from church ornament. The expression of the faces in the crowd of visitors is far in advance of anything we have seen hitherto in the German cuts; and the engraving, which was probably on metal, is evidently facsimile of the drawing and is remarkably well executed. The narrow border on the right of the cut is from an illuminated manuscript. In another of Vostre's Missals we find a copy of an engraving after the German painter, Martin Schongauer, 'Christ bearing the Cross,' enclosed in a French Renaissance frame. In the sky there is a good example of the *criblé* work of which we have spoken. The towers of Jerusalem in the background must have been evolved from the artist's inner consciousness: he certainly never saw the Holy City.

Antoine Verard also published many 'Livres d'Heures,'[1] very much like Vostre's. We are told that he frequently printed a few copies on the finest vellum and had them coloured in exact imitation of the illuminated Missals. One of Verard's patrons was the Duc d'Angoulême, a noted bibliophile, who commissioned him to print on vellum the romance of 'TRISTAN,' the 'Book of Consolation' of Boethius, the 'Ordinaire du Chrétien,' and the 'Heures en François,' all with illuminated borders and handsome bindings. For this great amount of work Verard received about 240*l.*, then equivalent perhaps to 1,000*l.* of the present day. We give an outline copy of one of the pages of the romance of 'TRISTAN,' which will repay much attention both for the principal subject, the King's Banquet, and the tapestry on the wall, which ought to be coloured to be properly appreciated. This famous publisher issued also a huge chronicle in five folio volumes, the 'Miroir Historical,' profusely illustrated with good wood engravings; the first volume in 1495, the last in 1496.

[1] In a recent Catalogue, Mr. Quaritch offers no less than seven different editions of the illustrated 'Livre d'Heures' printed by Verard, at prices varying from 60*l.* to 200*l.*

Thielman Kerver, the German, also brought out many 'Books of Hours,' copying those issued by Simon Vostre in



THE KING'S BANQUET

(From the romance of 'Tristan,' published by Antoine Verard)

a most barefaced way; indeed, piracy of this kind was rampant all over Europe, and but little regarded. We give

a reduced copy of Kerver's book-mark; in the original it will be seen that the background is *criblé*, thus suggesting that it was cut on metal.

It was Guyot Marchant who produced, in 1485, the first edition of the 'DANCE OF DEATH,' which contained seventeen engravings on ten folio leaves, with the text printed in the

MARK OF THIELMAN KERVER

old Gothic characters. This awe-inspiring but highly popular subject had been painted on the walls of many public buildings in Germany and France, and in past ages it had always been a great favourite with the lower classes (many of our readers will remember a version of it on the walls of the curious old wooden bridge at Lucerne, the designs of which have doubtless been handed down by tradition)—but Mar-

chant was the first who printed the story in a series of woodcuts, well drawn and admirably engraved, and he had his reward, for the work was reprinted over and over again. The Pope, the Emperor, the Bishop, the Duke and the Duchess are given with much spirit, and are evidently the work of a clever draughtsman, who might, however, have made his Death a little less hideous. But there was a great love of the horrible in those days.

A special chapter might well be devoted to the beautiful marks used by French printers. Guyot Marchant's mark represents leather-workers engaged at their trade, and above are a few musical notes. There are two varieties of this device. The mark of Jehan Du Pré is an elaborate piece of work, in which heraldry plays a conspicuous part, while that of Antoine Caillaut is pictorial. The Le Noirs used devices in which the heads of negroes figured prominently. The well-known mark of Badius Ascensius represents printers at work. Jehan Petit used several beautiful cuts, in which his mark forms part of an elaborate design.

CHAPTER VII

IN ENGLAND IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many of the finest churches in England were built by architects so celebrated that some of them were sent for to erect similar buildings in France. The beautiful carvings and highly decorated monuments still existing in our cathedrals prove that the art of sculpture in England was at that time little inferior to that of other countries. And in the British Museum and Bodleian Library, and many private collections, there is plentiful evidence that the miniature painters and illuminators were but little behind their brethren in Italy and France; even the binders, as we see by existing work, used excellent ornament in the decoration of the covers of their books. Why is it, then, that we find the art of wood-engraving, when it was flourishing in all the chief countries on the Continent, almost at its earliest state of infancy in England? This is a question very difficult to answer. Certainly our great printers, William Caxton, and his successors, Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson, did not follow the example of the great typographers of Venice or the yet more-to-be-praised booksellers of Paris, who devoted so much energy and taste in the decoration of their books.

Of the few cuts printed in the fifteenth century, such as they are, we must say a few words. The earliest are all

small devotional pictures, representing Scriptural subjects, as 'The Image of Pity,' a figure of Christ on the Cross surrounded by emblems of the Passion; four or five only of these early cuts have been found.

William Caxton, the first English printer, who was born in the Weald of Kent about the year 1422, was apprenticed to Robert Large, a rich mercer of London, who was Lord Mayor in 1440. In the following year the master died and Caxton went to Bruges, where he prospered in business, and in 1462 was made Governor of a Company of English Merchants who traded in Flanders, then the foremost mercantile country in the world. In 1471 Caxton gave up commerce and attached himself to the court of Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, the sister of Edward IV. At the request of the duchess, he then translated the *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*, written by Raoul Lefevre, and employed Colard Mansion of Bruges to produce it. This was the first book printed in the English language. In passing his book through the press Caxton learned the new art, and with type bought of Colard Mansion he set up the first printing-press in England, at the sign of 'The Red Pale' in the Almonry at Westminster, at the end of the year 1476. 'The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers,' which appeared in 1477, is believed to be the first book printed in England; this was followed by 'The Morale Prouerbes of Cristyne,' and several other books, all without illustration. In 1478 he printed 'The Mirrour of the World,' the first book printed in England with cuts, one of which we give as an example; and the more famous 'Game and Playe of the Chesse,' from the second edition of which we have taken as a specimen 'The Knight,' which Caxton thus describes: 'The knyght ought to be maad al armed upon a hors in such wise that he have an helme on his heed and a spere in his right hond, and coverid with his shelde, a swerde and a mace on his left syde, clad with an halberke and plates tofore his

breste, legge harnoys on his legges, spores on his heelis, on hys handes hys gauntelettes, hys hors wel broken and taught, and apte to bataylle, and coveryd with hys armes.' (Orthography was not much regarded in those days.) This book is so rare and so keenly sought for that at the sale at Osterley

MUSIC

(*From Caxton's 'Mirrour of the World'*)

Park in 1855 a perfect copy was bought for the enormous sum of 1,950*l.* In 1483 appeared 'The Golden Legende,' considered to be his *magnum opus*, on account of the beauty of the typography; and about 1490 'The Talis of Cauntyrburye' with 27 cuts representing individual pilgrims, and one with all the pilgrims seated round a large table. It is

said that Caxton printed ninety-nine different works, of which sixty-four survive either in perfect books or in fragments, which may be consulted at the British Museum. He produced the first printed edition of Chaucer, Lydgate, Gower, and Sir Thomas Malory's 'King Arthur.' He was

THE KNIGHT

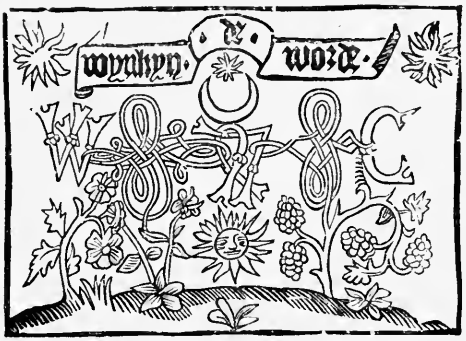
(*From Caxton's 'Game and Playe of the Chesse'*)

an accomplished linguist, and translated and published Cicero's Orations 'De Senectute' and 'De Amicitia,' Virgil's 'Æneid' and many other classical works.

With one exception none of his books has a title-page, though some have prologues and colophons; and the pages are not numbered. They are all printed in the Gothic

character known as 'black letter,' and nearly all are in small folio size. Caxton, we are assured, received the patronage and friendship of all the great men of his time and was much esteemed throughout Europe; and from a miniature painting in a beautiful manuscript in the library of Lambeth Palace we know that Earl Rivers presented him with his first book in his hand to the King, Edward IV. It is supposed that he died at the end of 1491 in his sixty-ninth year.

Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's pupil and successor, was a



WYNKYN DE WORDE'S MARK
With Caxton's Initials

native of Lorraine. He probably came over with him from Bruges, and so attached was he to his master, and so highly did he esteem him, that in all the nine book-marks that De Worde used, he always included the initials W. C. The mark we have given is of rare occurrence, and is one of the best pieces of engraving of the time. Bibliographers have found four hundred books printed by him; among them is 'The Golden Legende,' with woodcuts (1493); a translation of 'Huon de Bordeaux,' from which Shakespeare borrowed the plot of his 'Midsummer Night's Dream'; and his best-known

work, often reprinted, 'Treatyses perteynynge to Hawkynge and Huntynge, and Fyshynge with an Angle,' by Dame Juliana Berners (1496), which contains many woodcuts, one of which, a man fishing, is very quaint (*see engraving*). A book which was 'imprynted at London in Flete Street in 1531,' called 'Pilgrymage of Perfeecyon, A devoute Treatyse in Englysshe,' is illustrated by three curiously folded woodcuts. De Worde was the first printer in England who used the Roman type. Several of his books have a woodcut on the title-page.

In his 'History of Wood-engraving,' Mr. Chatto gives his opinion about the cuts of this period:—'Although I am inclined to believe that within the fifteenth century there were no persons who practised wood-engraving in this country as a distinct profession, yet it by no means follows from such an admission that Caxton's and De Worde's cuts must have been engraved by foreign artists. The manner in which they are executed is so coarse that they might have been cut by any person who could handle a graver. Looking at them merely as specimens of wood-engraving, they are not generally superior to the practice-blocks cut by a modern wood-engraver's apprentice within the first month of his novitiate.'

Soon there were other printers in London. Richard Pynson began to publish books from his own press in Fleet Street. His first book illustrated with woodcuts appears to have been 'The Canterbury Tales,' printed before 1493. In the following year Pynson issued Lydgate's 'Falle of Princis' with numerous small woodcuts by a master-hand, which appear too good to be English.

For a 'Sarum Missal' of 1500, he used some beautifully engraved borders and ornaments, as well as a large cut of Archbishop Morton's coat of arms. Another of his important works was Lord Berners' translation of Syr John Froissart's 'Cronycles of Englande, Fraunce, Spayne, &c.' We give a

'FYSHYNGE WYTH AN ANGLE'

(*From 'The Book of St. Albans,' printed by Wynkyn de Worde in* 1496)

copy of Pynson's 'Mark,' but we fear both this and De Worde's were engraved on the Continent.

In 1498, Julian Notary established an office from which twenty-three books have been traced. Many of them have curious woodcuts, some of which seem to have descended to

RICHARD PYNSON'S MARK

him from Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde. We find the decoration of the covers of Notary's works mentioned with approval in the early history of book-binding, which arrived at a much greater perfection than wood-engraving in this country at the close of the fifteenth century.

CHAPTER VIII

IN GERMANY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

We must now retrace our brief history to Germany, where, under the immediate direction and control of such well-known artists as Albrecht Dürer of Nürnberg (*b.* 1471, *d.* 1528) and Hans Burgkmair of Augsburg (*b.* 1472, *d.* 1531), as well as of Lucas Cranach, a Franconian (*b.* 1472, *d.* 1553), and, afterwards, of Hans Holbein of Augsburg (*b.* 1497, *d.* 1543), the art of wood-engraving in its grandest and purest form arrived at its first culmination. This was in a great measure due to the liberal patronage of the Emperor Maximilian, who, possessing a great love of art, esteemed all painters, architects, designers, and engravers as highly as his warriors. He was fond of magnificence in a truly imperial way, and the superb series of wood-engravings—the noblest the world has ever seen—known as 'The Triumphs of Maximilian,' were the outcome of this generous tendency. Of these celebrated works, which were not completed when the Emperor died in 1519, we must speak in their proper place.

It was to the genius of Albrecht Dürer and the engravers who translated his drawings into woodcuts that the art received its new vigour. Up to this time wood-engraving in Germany had been the work of craftsmen who were little better than mechanics; but when Dürer and Burgkmair, who knew the capabilities of the art, made drawings on the wood expressly for the engravers to reproduce in exact lines, there

was a quick improvement which went on increasing in excellence for more than half a century. After the death of Holbein and his immediate successors, the art faded into insignificance in Germany for many years.

The first important work of the early life of Albrecht Dürer was a series of fifteen large drawings on wood representing allegorical Scenes from the Apocalypse. They are mystical, indeed almost incomprehensible; at the same time we are obliged to notice the tremendous vigour and the wonderful power of invention in the man who designed them. But his attempt to embody the supernatural led him into the most extravagant conceptions. 'In attempting to bring such themes within the power of expression which art possesses,' writes Mr. Woodbery, 'he strove to give speech to the unutterable.' Yet the genius of the true artist was apparent through all his work. The most celebrated of the Apocalypse designs is the fourth in the book, 'The Opening of the First Four Seals,' a wonderfully grand conception of the Four Horsemen going forth to conquer; Death on the pale horse below, and 'Hell following him.' (Revelation vi. 8.) King, burgher, peasant and priest, have all fallen beneath him. Although we are expressly told that Dürer himself printed this work in 1498, it by no means follows that he engraved the woodcuts; they are greatly in advance of any previous work of the kind, and this may be attributed to the fact that the artist who designed them knew the best capabilities of the art. If he and the unknown engraver had learned the advantages of lowering the face of the wood when delicate lines were required, and the present methods of overlaying the cuts to produce greater intensity of colour, some of the engravings of Dürer's time would be models of excellence.

The series of the Apocalypse was succeeded by three others in which the human interest is far greater. These were what the artist himself called 'The Larger Passion of

Our Lord,' a series of eleven large cuts, with a vignette on the title-page; 'The Life of the Virgin,' a series of twenty cuts; and 'The Smaller Passion of Our Lord,' a series of thirty-six cuts of less size, with a well-known vignette of 'Christ Mocked' on the title-page. These works mark an important era in the history of wood-engraving and clearly led onwards to its future development. They were all published between 1510 and 1512, and so great was their popularity that the celebrated Italian engraver, Marc Antonio Raimondi, reproduced the whole of 'The Smaller Passion' in copper-plate—much, as may be imagined, to Dürer's annoyance.

In the 'Larger Passion of Our Lord' we find representations of the Last Supper, Christ on the Mount of Olives, the Betrayal, the Scourging, Christ Mocked, Christ Bearing his Cross, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and other subjects from the New Testament; and so deeply did the highly-wrought artist feel the awful importance of his subject that he repeated some of these events in at least five different series. In all of them his characters are dressed in the uncouth habiliments of German peasants, and we see bits of German villages; but in this respect he only followed the example of the great Italian painters, who clothed the most sacred figures in the costumes of their own towns, and, when possible, gave an Italian landscape for a background to their pictures of the Holy Land.

The series of twenty large engravings called 'The Life of the Virgin' was published and sold by Dürer himself in book form at about the same time (1510), and was equally well received by the German people, who were at that time in a state of religious ferment consequent on the preachings of Martin Luther, and Dürer was one of his prominent disciples.

But it was the series of thirty-seven smaller woodcuts, known as 'The Lesser Passion,' that was most popular; in some measure, perhaps, because the prints are of a more

THE VIRGIN CROWNED BY TWO ANGELS. BY ALBRECHT DÜRER

Engraved by Jerome Andre (?)

handy size. All the subjects of 'The Larger Passion' are repeated, with variations, in this series, and twenty-five others from the Life of Christ are added. By a happy chance, thirty-five of the original woodcuts of this series are preserved in the British Museum. In the year 1840 they were reprinted, by permission of the trustees, under the care of Mr. Henry Cole. The wood was found to be much worm-eaten, but all injury was deftly repaired by Mr. Thurston Thompson, and a small edition of the work was issued [1] with an exhaustive introduction by Mr. Cole.

The most admired of all the works of Dürer are the large plates known as 'The Knight, Death, and the Devil,' 'The Conversion of St. Eustace,' 'Melencolia,' 'St. Jerome in his Chamber,' and several others which he engraved or etched on copper with his own hands and which he himself published. Fine impressions of these marvellous works are now as eagerly sought for as celebrated Rembrandt etchings.

Dürer made also many drawings on wood which were engraved and printed under his immediate supervision, and issued in separate sheets. Of one of the most beautiful, of these, 'The Virgin crowned by two Angels,' we are able to give an impression which is an exact facsimile (reduced) of a print of the year 1518. Nothing of its kind can exceed the brilliancy of the original, the engraving is as nearly perfect as possible, and were it not for the hardness of the lines in the faces and other objects where softness is required, no craftsman of the present day could surpass its excellence as a product of the printing-press. Many other separate large wood-engravings, after Dürer's drawings, appeared between the years 1510 and 1518, such as 'The Holy Family with the three Rabbits,' 'St. Jerome in his Chamber,' 'The Flight into Egypt,' 'Beheading of St. John the Baptist,' and, among other strange subjects, a representation of a Rhinoceros.

[1] It was printed, with descriptions in black-letter, at the Chiswick Press, and published by Joseph Cundall, 12 Old Bond Street, 1840.

Dürer also designed a frontispiece to his own book of poems, published in 1510.

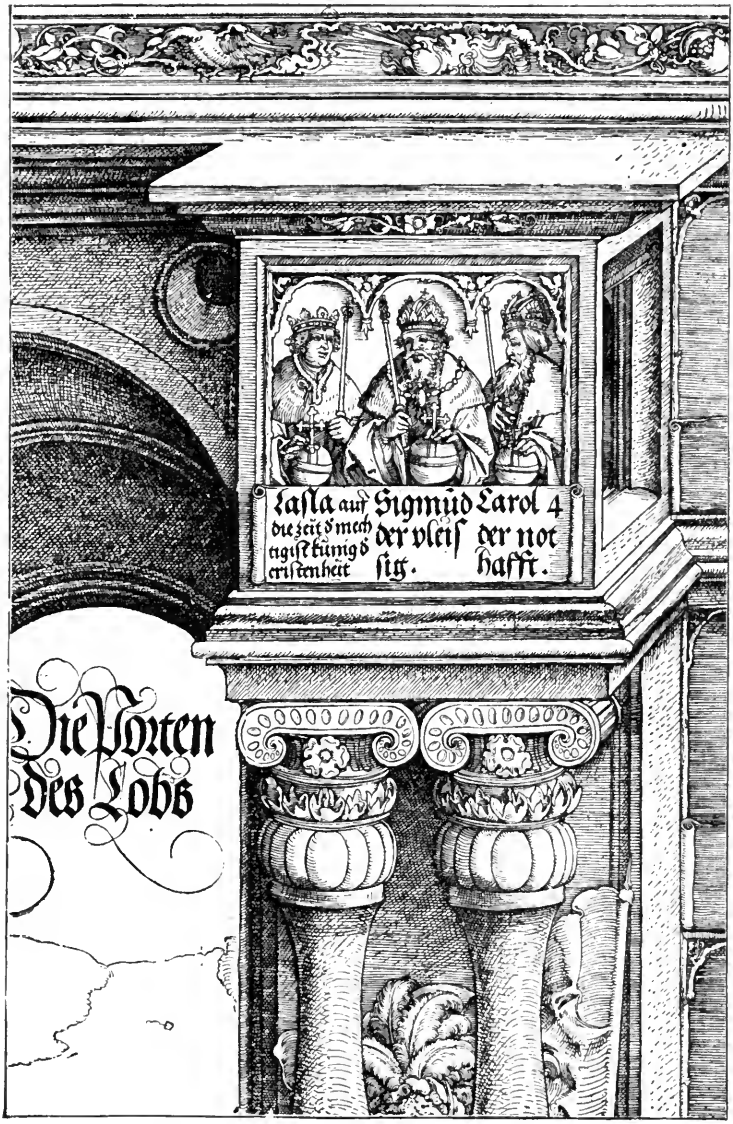
Three magnificent books illustrated with woodcuts of great size, the 'Theuerdank,' the 'Werskunig,' and the 'Freydal,' appeared in Germany early in the sixteenth century. The first is an epic relating to the Emperor Maximilian's journey to Burgundy on matrimonial affairs; it was published in 1517. Hans Schaufelein drew the designs for a hundred and eighteen cuts, measuring 6½ inches by 5½ inches each. The second is in honour of the Emperor's journeys in distant lands, and the third to celebrate his deeds of prowess. There are 237 designs, chiefly by Hans Burgkmair of Augsburg, in the 'Werskunig'; the blocks are still preserved; they remained unused till long after the Emperor's death, and were not published till 1775. The 'Freydal' has never been completed, though the designs are still in existence.

THE TRIUMPHS OF MAXIMILIAN

But we have yet to speak of 'The Triumphs of Maximilian.' This imperial work, the most important production of the art of wood-engraving the world has ever seen, was executed by command of the Emperor Maximilian to convey to posterity a pictorial representation of the magnificence of his court, the splendour of his victories, and the extent of his dominions. It consists of three distinct sets of designs: (I.) The 'Triumphal Arch,' (II.) the 'Triumphal Car,' both from the hand of Albrecht Dürer, and (III.) the 'Triumphal Procession,' by Hans Burgkmair. The size of the work is immense; if the whole series were laid out side by side it would cover about one hundred and ninety-two feet (64 yards!) The drawings were made on pear-wood and were cut by about eleven different engravers, of whom the most famous was Jerome of Nürnberg. Many of the original blocks are happily preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna, and on the backs of them are written the names or

initials of the various engravers. It is evident, therefore, that at the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a recognised school of wood-engravers in Germany of considerable importance. One of them, Jobst de Neger, or Dienecker, came from Antwerp; a few lived at Nürnberg, others at Augsburg.

Some idea of the 'Triumphal Arch' is conveyed to our mind when we learn that it was drawn on ninety-two separate blocks of wood, and that when properly joined it is ten and a half feet high and nine and a half feet wide! It was designed 'after the manner of those erected in honour of the Roman Emperors at Rome;' there are three gateways or entrances—that in the centre is called the Gate of Honour and Power, on the right is the Gate of Nobility, on the left the Gate of Fame, a part of which is seen in the illustration. The arch itself is decorated with portraits of the Roman Emperors from the time of Julius Cæsar, shields of arms showing the descent of the Emperor and his alliances, representations of his most famous exploits, including his adventures while chamois-hunting in the Tyrol, with explanatory verses in the German language cut in the wood. Above the central entrance is a grand tower surmounted by a figure of Fortune holding the imperial crown. The whole is a kind of epitome of the history of the German Empire. The 'projector of the design' was Hans Stabius, who calls himself the historiographer and poet of the Emperor. The work was begun in 1515—four years before the Emperor's death—and was not quite finished at the time of the death of the artist in 1528. Although we do not see the greatest excellence of Dürer's peculiar genius in this immense production executed to order, for it is too full of German fantasies and very unlike the classic simplicity of the old Roman arches, it will be found to contain the finest work of the wood-engraver at that period. Some parts of it are of a marvellous delicacy that can hardly be surpassed.



THE GATE OF FAME

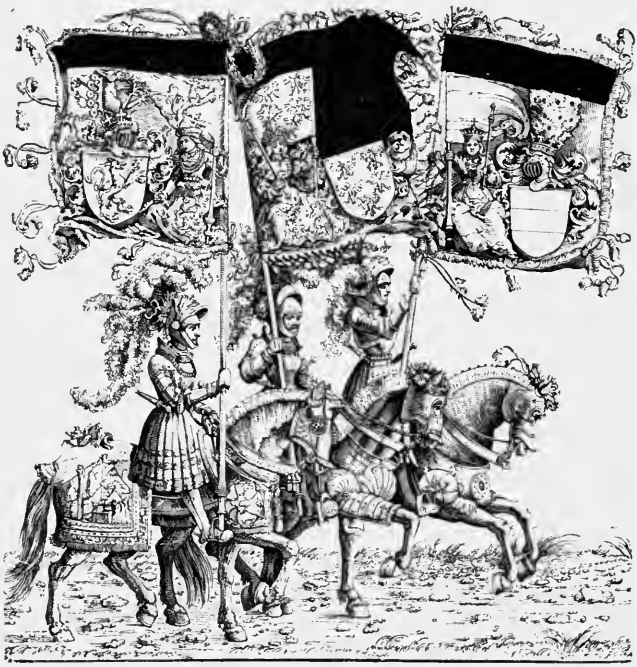
(*From the 'Triumphal Arch' by Albrecht Dürer. Engraved by Jerome Andre.*)

The 'Triumphal Car,' also designed by Dürer at the suggestion of Stabius, is a richly decorated chariot drawn by six pairs of horses. In it the Emperor in his imperial robes is seated under a canopy amid allegorical figures representing Justice, Truth, Clemency, Temperance, and the like, who offer to him triumphal wreaths. Over the canopy is an inscription: quod. in. celis. sol. Mor. in. terra. Cæsar. est. The Car is driven by Reason with Reins of Nobility and Power, and the horses are guided by female figures of Swiftness, Prudence, Boldness, and similar equine virtues. The whole of the design is seven feet four inches in length and about a foot and a half in height.

To modern eyes the car is not prepossessing, the figures of the attendant damsels are by no means elegant, and the horses would not, we fear, meet with the approval of English critics. It brings to us a reminiscence of the funeral car of the Duke of Wellington, which, we remember, was designed by a German artist. Some parts of the decorations are excellent and the whole is well engraved.

The 'Triumphal Procession' is still more important. It consists of a series of one hundred and thirty-five large cuts, which, joined together, would cover in length one hundred and seventy-five feet (upwards of 58 yards!) A herald, mounted on a fantastic, four-footed winged gryphon, leads the procession; next follow two led horses bearing a tablet with these words, doubtless by Stabius: 'This Triumph has been made for the praise and everlasting memory of the noble pleasures and glorious victories of the most serene and illustrious prince and lord, Maximilian, Roman Emperor elect, and head of Christendom, King and Heir of seven Christian kingdoms, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy and of other grand principalities and provinces of Europe.' More horses follow, then come falconers with hawks on their wrists, hunters of the chamois and the bear, behind them are elks and buffaloes, richly caparisoned stags four

abreast, and camels drawing decorated chariots in which ride the musicians. The Emperor's favourite jester, Conrad von der Rosen, follows on horseback, bearing an immense flag;

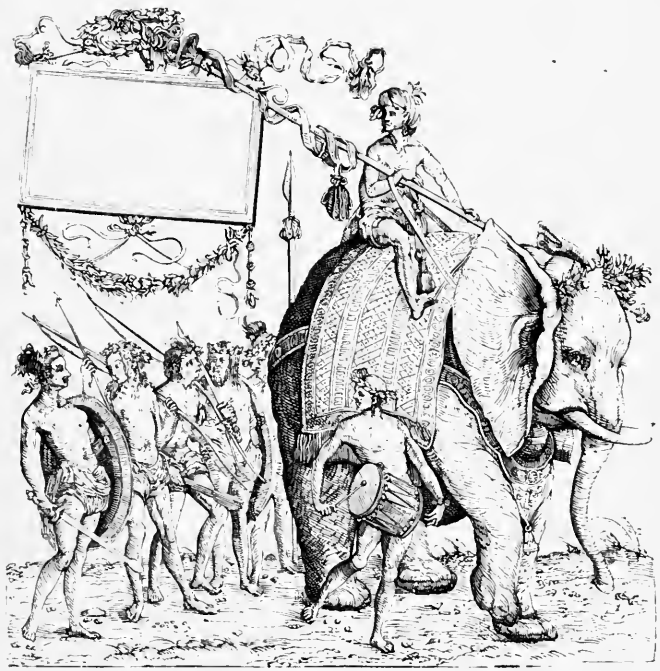


HORSEMEN, THREE ABREAST, WITH BANNERS

(*From 'The Triumphal Procession' by Burgkmair. Cut by Dienecker and other engravers*)

then come fools, fencing-masters, and soldiers of all kinds armed for every service, horsemen three abreast, with banners inscribed with the names of the great battles

which the Emperor had won, cars filled with trophies taken from conquered nations, among them the 'Savages of Calicut'—natives of India—one of them riding a huge



THE SAVAGES OF CALICUT
(*From 'The Triumphal Procession' by Burgkmair. Cut by Dienecker and other engravers*)

elephant, and numerous other figures filled up the immense length of the engraving. The whole work, though evidently intended to be a glorification of the great Emperor, is much

more valuable to us at the present day as a marvellous record of the barbaric magnificence of the middle ages, and an outward aspect of secular life. 'The ideal of worldly power and splendour, the spirit of pleasure and festival, is shown forth in this marvellously varied march of laurelled horses and horsemen, whose trappings and armour have the beauty and glitter of peaceful parade. There is nowhere else a work which so presents at once the feudal spirit and feudal delights in such exuberance of picturesque and feudal display.'

Dürer's designs for the 'Prayer-book of Maximilian' also claim a short notice. Only three copies of the work are known to be in existence, one of which is in the British Museum. The margins are full of fanciful designs; amid intertwining branches, birds are singing, apes are climbing, snakes creeping, and gnats flying. King David is charming a stork with his harp; a fox is playing a flute to poultry. It is a curious mixture of the sacred and profane, for which Dürer has often been censured. The engraving of the subjects, which are in outline, is excellent.

CHAPTER IX

HANS HOLBEIN AND HANS LÜTZELBURGER

Hans Holbein, who first saw the light at Augsburg in the year 1497, was the greatest artist ever born in Germany, and as he passed half of his artistic life in England we may claim some little share in the glory of his undisputed eminence.

The son of a worthy painter of sacred pictures for the Church, he was brought up amidst all the paraphernalia of the studio, and at a very early age began to design title-pages, initial letters, and ornaments for numerous important books published by Johann Froben, Valentine Curio, and other printers of Basel, and Christoph Froschover, of Zürich. Some of these folio title-pages, most of which are of an architectural character, are veritable works of art, and are greatly treasured at the present day. Next we find him making illustrations for the New Testament, some of which were engraved on wood and some on metal, probably by Dienecker or Lützelburger, though of this we have no direct evidence.

But Holbein's greatest fame, as a designer of book-illustrations, is derived from his well-known series of the 'Dance of Death,' which was first given to the world in the year 1538, though from some proofs still in existence they are known to have been engraved before the artist's first visit to London in 1527. It is believed that the original forty-one drawings on wood were all cut by Hans Lützelburger, who has been very properly called the 'True Prince of Wood-

Engravers,' for, in the opinion of our foremost critics, these 'Dance of Death' cuts are the masterpieces of the art at that period, excelling even the work of Jerome Andre of Nürnberg on Dürer's 'Triumphal Arch.' Seventeen other designs were added to the 'Dance of Death' afterwards, making the complete series fifty-eight. The original blocks

HOLBEIN'S DANCE OF DEATH
THE KING

are lost; they have been copied on the Continent many times, and were reproduced in England in perfect facsimile and in the very best manner under the superintending care of Francis Douce, a celebrated antiquary, by John and Mary Byfield and George Bonner, all excellent engravers. Accompanied by a learned dissertation by Mr. Douce, the work

was published by William Pickering[1] in the year 1833. It is from electrotypes of these blocks that we are enabled to present to our readers the designs of 'The King,' The Queen,' 'The Astrologer,' and 'The Pedlar,' four of the best of the series.

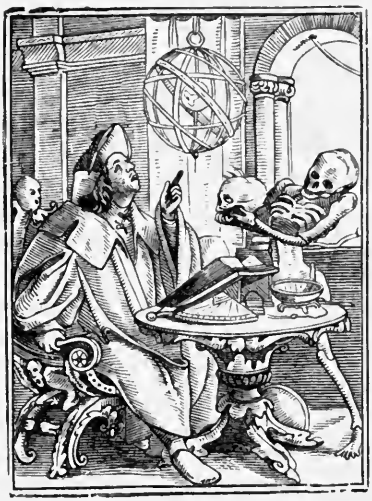
Wall-pictures of 'The Dance of Death,' with but little

HOLBEIN'S DANCE OF DEATH
THE QUEEN

artistic merit, existed at a much earlier period, and some of them may still be traced in the cloisters of old cathedrals. The subject was a great favourite with both priest and people in the Middle Ages; it appealed to the feelings of rich and poor, old and young, and Holbein's 'fearful' pictures, as

[1] It is now issued by George Bell & Sons, who also publish Holbein's Bible Pictures.

soon as they appeared, met with immense popularity, which, to this day, has never ceased. Almost every class is represented in them—the King at his well-spread board is served by his fellow King, who fills his bowl; the Queen, walking with her ladies, is led into an open grave; in a landscape, in which we see a flock of sheep, Death appears to an aged



HOLBEIN'S DANCE OF DEATH
THE ASTROLOGER

Bishop; here we see Death running away with the Abbot's mitre and crozier; there he visits the Physician and the Astrologer. In the church is a Preacher who holds the people in awe, behind him is a Preacher more dread still; the Miser with his bags, the Merchant with his bales, are alike surprised by Death; the Knight's armour is defenceless, the Pedlar with his basket cannot escape, the Waggoner with

his wine-cart is overthrown. All are represented in their turn—the Duchess in her bed, the poor woman in her hovel, the child who is ruthlessly taken from his mother. We can imagine the sensation which such a work would create among a very impressionable people at that season of religious ferment, the greatest the world has ever known. Thirteen

HOLBEIN'S DANCE OF DEATH
THE PEDLAR

editions from the original blocks are known to have been printed between the years 1538 and 1563.

About the same time another series of wood-engravings appeared, consisting of eighty-six designs by Holbein, drawn on wood larger than the 'Dance of Death' blocks and just as well engraved, probably by Lützelburger; these were 'Scenes from Old Testament History,' generally known as 'Holbein's

Bible Cuts'; they were issued separately with descriptions in verse and were also used to illustrate Bibles. This series was also reproduced by the same artists who cut the 'Dance of Death,' under the superintendence of Mr. Douce; and it is from electrotypes of these blocks that we are enabled to give our two Bible illustrations, 'The Happiness of the Godly' (Psalm i.), and 'Joab's Artifice' (2 Samuel xiv. 4). They

THE HAPPINESS OF THE GODLY.—HOLBEIN'S BIBLE CUTS
Engraved by Lützelburger

copy the original prints in exact facsimile, and, looking at them, one cannot but wonder at the high state of perfection to which the art of wood-engraving had attained nearly four hundred years ago. At that time, Germany stood alone in its excellence; France, and even Italy, were far behind her; and England and Spain were nowhere. We ought to add that both the 'Dance of Death' and the 'Bible Cuts' were

issued, with text, by the brothers Trechsel, the celebrated publishers of Lyons, in 1538, when Holbein must have been in England.

A wonderful alphabet, with 'Dance of Death' figures, evidently designed by Holbein, has **Hanns Lützelburger (Formschnider) genant Franck** printed at the foot of the page. These letters were probably engraved on metal. A 'Peasant's

JOAB'S ARTIFICE.—HOLBEIN'S BIBLE CUTS
Engraved by Lützelburger

Dance' and 'Children's Sports,' designed as headings of chapters by the same artist, are well known, as they have been frequently reproduced.

In the works of 'The Little Masters' who succeeded Dürer and Holbein we are not much concerned. Albrecht Altdorfer (*d.* 1538) was a designer as well as an engraver on wood. Hans Beham (*d.* 1550 ?) is best known by his twenty-

six designs from the Apocalypse which Mr. Linton praises as of 'supremest excellence.' He says, moreover, that they were probably engraved on metal (perhaps copper), by Beham himself, as well as his 81 little Bible cuts which were used to illustrate the first English Bible. He also designed and perhaps engraved several large cuts, one of which, 'The Fountain of Youth,' is four feet long; another is 'The Dance of the Daughter of Herodias,' reproduced by Dr. Lippmann. Hans Brosamer (*d.* 1552) designed and engraved pictures for books. Heinrich Aldegrever (*d.* 1558) is well known for his portraits of Luther, Melanchthon, and the notorious John of Leyden. Virgil Solis (*d.* 1562) was a prolific book-illustrator; he designed a series of 216 Bible pictures, all of small size, as well as 178 cuts for Ovid's 'Metamorphoses,' and 194 for Æsop's Fables; he also designed and probably engraved much ornament, especially for title-pages of books, some of which was very good. Jost Amman (*d.* 1591) is celebrated for his book of 'All Ranks, Arts, and Trades,' with one hundred and thirty-two figures. (See page 128).

The religious books printed in Germany at the end of the sixteenth century were altogether inferior as regards their illustrations, though a few are fairly designed and executed. Ornamental borders, especially on title-pages, were usual, and those designed by Lucas Cranach are of considerable merit. Many of the German printers' marks or devices, which are very well engraved, were the work of some of the best artists of the times.

These were but expiring efforts, and by the end of the century, owing to continual warfare and internal disturbances, the art of wood-engraving in Germany was almost forgotten.

CHAPTER X

IN ITALY AND FRANCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

In the early years of the sixteenth century, the printers of Florence issued many cheap popular books, chiefly *Rappresentazioni*, i.e. Plays, sacred or secular. These plays are generally badly printed in double columns, but they are illustrated with numerous cuts, some of which are of peculiar merit. The earliest known printer of them was Francesco Benvenuto (c. 1516–1545), but the majority appear to have been issued between 1550 and 1580, anonymously, though we know that Giovanni Baleni of Florence was the printer of some of these.

There were also many quaint little tracts, metrical *Novelle* and *Istorie*, of which a collection has been found at the University Library, Erlangen; a valuable description of them was published by Dr. Varnhagen. The poems are, as a rule, illustrated with small cuts, inclosed within a neat border, the subjects are usually well chosen, and the drawing very good; the treatment of some of the domestic scenes is worthy of Bewick.

In striking contrast to the simplicity of these popular wood-engravings are the elaborate engravings which appeared in the more expensive books issued in the latter half of the same century, when illustrated editions of Dante,

Boccaccio, Ovid, Æsop's Fables, and Alciat's 'Emblems,' appeared, one after the other, but not one of these calls for

FRONTISPIECE OF 'LE SORTI DI MARCOLINI'
By Giuseppe Porta Venice 1540

special notice; nor did the best of their wood-engravings equal the work of Lützelburger. The frontispiece of a curious book, *Le Sorti di Marcolini da Forli,* printed at Venice in 1540, of which we offer a reduced copy, gives us a good idea of the prevailing art of the period. It is said to be taken from a design by Raphael for his celebrated picture 'The School of Athens,' and we see by the tablet in the foreground that it was either drawn on the wood or engraved by Joseph (Giuseppe) Porta, known as Salviati, after his more celebrated master whom he accompanied to Venice.

LE POT-CASSÉ
(Device of Geoffroy Tory)

In Paris, in the first half of the sixteenth century, there lived a very celebrated printer, 'Geoffroy Tory, Peintre et Graveur, Premier Imprimeur Royal, Reformateur de l'Orthographe, et de la Typographie,' as he is described by his biographer, M. A. Bernard (Paris, 1857). He was born at Bourges in 1480, and in early life went to Paris, where he not only wrote books and printed them, but designed ornamental borders and engraved them. He also studied his profession in Italy, and brought back with him new ideas about printing and illustrating books. Such a man had great influence at that time, for he had much inborn taste and excellent skill, and publishers should all be proud of him as one of their most praiseworthy ancestors. He adopted the singular design the *Pot-cassé*, of which we give a copy, as

FROM 'LES HEURES' PRINTED BY SIMON DE COLINES
Engraved by Geoffroy Tory

his somewhat enigmatical device ; and some writers maintain that the little ' Cross of Lorraine ' (‡) found on many of the cuts of this period is also his mark. In our illustration, taken from the *Heures*, printed by Simon de Colines, this Cross of Lorraine will be seen under the kneeling priest. He made antique letters, he himself tells us, for Monseigneur the Treasurer for War, Master Jehan Grolier, whom we know as one of the best patrons of book-binding ; and wrote a book which he called ' *Champfleury, auquel est contenu l'art et science de la deue proportion des lettres . . . selon le corps et le visage humain*,' a very learned and amusing treatise. Some of the initial letters in this book are very cleverly designed and engraved—probably by the ingenious author. The picture of ' Antoine Macault reading his translation of Diodorus Siculus to the King ' is said to have been engraved by Tory ; it is evidently either from a design by Hans Holbein or by an artist who copied his style. All the figures in this excellent engraving are portraits—the King (Francis I.), his three sons, and his favourite nobles. It is the best cut that was issued at Paris at this time. Geoffroy Tory died in 1533, though his workshop was carried on for many years afterwards.

Among other woodcuts of this period we find a small portrait of the poet Nicholas Bourbon, dated 1535. As this is a direct copy of the portrait of the same individual, undoubtedly by Holbein, which is now at Windsor Castle, and as the ornamentation is quite in Holbein's style, we cannot doubt that this celebrated painter had frequent relations with the publishers on the Continent in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Another celebrated printer who enjoyed the patronage of the King was Robert Estienne, who, by some curious perversity, is frequently spoken of by English scholars and biographers as Robert Stephens, simply because, following the fashion of the day, he often latinised his name and signed

ANTOINE MACAULT READING HIS TRANSLATION OF DIODORUS SICULUS TO KING FRANCIS I.

Designed by Holbein. Engraved by Geoffroy Tory?

Robertus Stephanus. Estienne was, next to Aldo Manuzio of Venice, the most learned of printers, and deserves to be held in due reverence. The most important illustrated book he published was 'The Lives of the Dukes of Milan,' by Paulus Jovius (Paris, 1549). This work has sixteen portraits of the Dukes, well engraved, some say by Geoffroy Tory himself, but this is a matter of dispute, though they certainly were cut in his workshop.

Among the most characteristic works of the wood-engraver in the middle of the century were two large processions, 'The Triumphal Entry of King Henri II. into Paris,' published by Roville of Lyons, in 1548, and 'The Triumphal Entry into Lyons,' issued in the following year. These prints were designed either by Jean Cousin or Cornelis de la Haye, but the name of the engraver is nowhere mentioned. They are somewhat similar to 'The Triumph of Maximilian,' by Burgkmair, but are not nearly so important as works of art, and did nothing to raise the character of wood-engraving.

In the books published in the second half of the century we frequently meet with the name of Bernhard Salomon (born at Lyons in 1512), generally called Le Petit Bernard, who made designs for Alciat's 'Emblems' (A.D. 1560) and Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (A.D. 1564), which were engraved in the workshop of Geoffroy Tory, and published by Jean (or Hans) de Tournes, of Lyons. Bernard's style was much influenced by the Italian painters Rosso and Primaticcio, who had been invited by the King to decorate Fontainebleau, and may be easily recognised by the extreme height and tenuity of his figures, and by the peculiar ornament which he used as framework for his drawings.

Another book containing equally good illustrations is *Ghesneden Figuera wyten Niewen Testamente* ('Engraved Figures from the New Testament'), adorned with ninety-two small cuts besides the title-page and initial letters; these were drawn and probably engraved by Guilliame Borluyt,

citizen of Ghent, and published by Jean de Tournes of Lyons in 1557. From the fineness of the lines and other indications we suspect these designs were cut on metal, which was much used at this time instead of wood. Through the kindness of Messrs. H. S. Nichols & Co., of Soho Square, who possess an excellent copy of this very rare book, we are enabled to offer our readers two cuts, 'The Woman of Samaria' and 'Christ Scourged,' of the same size as the originals. The publishers of Lyons were celebrated from the end of the

CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA
By Guilliame Borluyt

fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century for their dainty little books, which were very prettily illustrated.

We must not conclude this chapter without mentioning another celebrated publisher, Christophe Plantin of Antwerp. He was born at Saint-Avertin, near Tours, in 1514, and at an early age apprenticed to a printer and book-binder, Robert Macé, at Caen; thence he went to Paris, whence wars soon drove him away. He next took refuge at Antwerp, where he employed himself in binding books and making leather

boxes, *coffrets*, curiously inlaid and gilt. By mistake he was, one dark evening, stabbed with a sword, and he afterwards suffered so much pain from the wound that he could not stoop without feeling it: consequently he turned to the business of a printer, and soon became the most celebrated man of the day in that craft. Philip II. of Spain made him

THE SCOURGING OF CHRIST
By Guilliame Borluyt

his chief printer, and under royal orders Plantin produced the well-known Polyglot Bible in eight folio volumes (1568-1573). He had previously printed some smaller books of Emblems (1564), and *Devises Héroïques* (1562), and had employed Pierre Huys, Lucas de Heere, Godefroid Ballain, and other artists, to illustrate them. He died in 1589. His second daughter married Jean Moret, one of the overseers of

the printing-office, and the business known as 'Plantin-Moretus' continued to prosper up to the present century. A few years since the offices were bought by the city authorities, and the Plantin Museum is now one of the principal attractions of Antwerp. In his various works Plantin used many woodcuts, but most of his title-pages have borders executed by Wierix, Pass, and other celebrated copperplate engravers. His device was a Hand with a pair of compasses, and his motto *Labore et Constantia*.

The history of wood-engraving and wood-engravers in Holland forms the subject of a monograph from the pen of Mr. W. M. Conway ('The Woodcutters of the Netherlands,' Cambridge, 1884). The list commences with a Louvain engraver, who worked for Veldener in 1475, and about the same time for John and Conrad de Westphalia.

Most of the greater Dutch towns had wood-engravers, and the work of these artists appears in many of the books printed in the Low Countries. As in France, many of the printers' marks are very good.

It was in this century that publishers began to illustrate their books with copperplate engravings, which soon came into general use, and these plates for many years, to a very great extent, superseded engraving on wood. Etchings by the artist's own hands are also frequently met with, and to these causes we may in a great measure attribute the decay of the Formschneider's art for at least two centuries.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES IN GERMANY, ITALY AND ENGLAND

In the portfolios of collectors of works of art of the sixteenth century we frequently meet with very interesting examples of printing in *chiaro-oscuro*, as it was called, by means of successive impressions of engraved wood-blocks. Sometimes two or three blocks were used, sometimes six or eight, in all cases with the intention of reproducing the appearance of a tinted water-colour drawing or an oil-painting. Those prints which were the least ambitious were the most successful, They were generally printed in various shades of grey and brown—from light sepia to deep umber—and sometimes the effects are admirable. A well-known designer and engraver on wood, Ugo da Carpi (c. 1520), introduced this new style of printing into Venice, and other artists, Antonio da Trento, Andrea Andreani, Bartolomeo Coriolano, and others made many successful efforts in a similar direction; their best works are much prized.

At the same time a group of Venetian artists, who were also engravers on wood, distinguished themselves by copying the works of Titian and other Italian painters. The most celebrated of these engravers were Nicolo Boldrini, Francesco da Nanto, Giovanni Battista del Porto, and Giuseppe Scolari, who all flourished between the years 1530 and 1580. Their

productions, which are on a large scale, are greatly valued by artists.

Near the end of the century a book of costume entitled *Habiti Antichi e Moderni di tutto il Mondo* was designed and published at Venice by Cesare Vecellio, who is said to have been a nephew of the great Titian. This work contains nearly six hundred figures in the costume of every age and country, admirably drawn and engraved; indeed, they are the best examples of the art of wood-engraving in Italy at the time. This excellent work was reproduced in their well-known style by Messrs. Firmin, Didot & Cie in two volumes (Paris, 1860).

An edition of 'Dante' published by the brothers Sessa at Venice in 1578 is well illustrated with good woodcuts.

German artists were also bitten at this time with a mania for reproducing pictures by means of colour blocks. The results, however, were much more curious than beautiful. We have before us a copy of a painting designed by Altdorfer, one of the 'Little Masters,' of 'The Virgin with the Holy Infant on her Lap,' set in an elaborate architectural frame. In this print at least eight different colour-blocks were used, among them a deep red and a vivid green. The printer's register has been fairly well kept, and the mechanical part of the work is worthy of all praise; but we fear the effect on most of our readers would be to produce anything but admiration. A Saint Christopher, designed and probably engraved by Lucas Cranach, printed in black and deep umber, only with the high lights carefully cut out of the latter block, is much more satisfactory.

In the middle and towards the end of the sixteenth century there were several excellent wood-engravings published in London in illustration of Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs' (1562), Holinshed's 'Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland' (1577), 'A Booke of Christian Prayers' (1569), and other works, chiefly from the press of the celebrated John Daye.

PORTRAIT OF JOHN DAYE, THE CELEBRATED PRINTER OF FOXE'S 'BOOK OF MARTYRS,' A.D. 1562

As an example we give one of the illustrations of Holinshed's Chronicles as a frontispiece. There can be no doubt that Holbein designed it; the ornamentation alone would almost prove it to be from his hand. The title-page of the 'Bishops' Bible,' printed about the same time, has a finely engraved border, representing the King handing the volume to the Bishops, who in turn present it to the people. There are many woodcuts in the text, but they are of very low merit.

We give an illustration of 'A Booke of Christian Prayers,' known as Queen Elizabeth's Prayer-book, from a fine portrait of Her Majesty kneeling on a handsome cushion, with clasped hands before a kind of altar. The Queen's dress is magnificent, and the ornamentation of the whole design is of a similar character. It is an excellent piece of engraving, and we are able to give a facsimile of it, cut about sixty years ago by George Bonner. Mr. Linton thinks the original was on metal; who engraved it is at present unknown. We fear there was no one in England who could produce such work, nor can anyone tell who made the design. It is printed on the back of the title-page, which is decorated with a border of a 'Jesse-tree,' with a figure of Jesse at the foot and the Virgin with the Holy Infant on her lap at the head. There are woodcut borders to each of the 274 pages, all betraying German origin, and evidently by different hands. A few floral designs and single figures of 'Temperance,' 'Charity,' and the like are the best. Among the rest is a series of 'Dance of Death' pictures, but *not* by Holbein. Another edition of this work was printed in 1590 at London. 'By Richard Yardley and Peter Short for the assignes of Richard Day dwelling in Bred-street hill at the signe of the Starre.' [Doubtless this was on the site of the present printing office of Richard Clay & Sons.] Richard Day was a son of John Day or Daye, as we often find the name printed.

Another illustrated book, 'The Cosmographical Glasse,

ELIZABETHA REGINA

(From 'A Booke of Christian Prayers.' Printed by John Daye, London, 1569.)

conteinyng the pleasant Principles of Cosmographie, Geographie, Hydrographie or Navigation. Compiled by William Cuningham, Doctor in Physicke' (of Norwich), was printed by John Day in 1559, with many cuts. In the ornamental title-page there is a large bird's-eye view of the city of Norwich, with a mark of the engraver, I. B. There is also a large and well-engraved portrait of the author, 'ætatis 28,' a rather sad-looking young man; and many initial letters, some of which have a small I. D. at the foot, which probably tell us that John Day himself engraved them. Others have a small I inside a larger C, and this monogram appears frequently on the small cuts in the border of Queen Elizabeth's Book of Prayers. John Day tells us in a work published in 1567 that the Saxon type in which it is printed was *cut* by himself.

John Day was a great friend of John Foxe, and assisted him in producing his celebrated 'Acts and Monuments of the Church,' generally known as his 'Booke of Martyrs.' In the 'Acts and Monuments,' printed in 1576, there is a large initial C, evidently drawn and engraved by the artists who produced the Queen's portrait. In this initial, Elizabetha Regina is seen seated in state, with her feet resting on the same cushion that appears in the larger print, attended by three of her Privy Councillors standing at her right hand. A figure of the Pope with two *broken* keys in his hands forms part of the decoration of the base; an immense cornucopia reaches over the top.

Early in the seventeenth century we meet with the name of an excellent wood-engraver at Antwerp, Christoph Jegher, who worked for many years with Peter Paul Rubens, and produced many large woodcuts. We are enabled to give a much-reduced copy of a 'Flight into Egypt,' which in the original is nearly twenty-four inches in length. Underneath appears the inscription, *P. P. Rub. delin. & excud.*, from which we learn that Rubens himself superintended the

printing, for *C. Jegher sculp.* appears on the other side. Some of this series of cuts were printed with a tint of sepia over them in imitation of the Italian chiaro-oscuro prints of the previous century. Christoph Jegher was born in Germany in 1590 (?) and died at Antwerp in 1670. He lived through many tempestuous years and did much good work. A con-

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. BY RUBENS

Reduced copy of the engraving by C. Jegher

temporary wood-engraver named Cornelius van Sichem, living at Amsterdam, produced a few excellent cuts from drawings by Heinrich Goltzius (*d.* 1617), who copied the Italian school.

At the end of the seventeenth century the art of wood-engraving reached its lowest ebb. There were a few tolerably good mechanical engravers on the Continent, who were

chiefly employed in the manufacture of ornaments for cards, and head and tail pieces for books and ballads, but nearly all the woodcuts we meet with in English books are of the most childish character. The rage for copper-plate engravings had set in with so much vigour among all the printers and publishers that the poor wood-engraver was well-nigh forgotten.

In London a new edition of 'Æsop's Fables,' edited by Dr. Samuel Croxall, and illustrated with many woodcuts much better engraved than was customary at the time, was published by Jacob Tonson at the Shakespear's Head, in the Strand, in 1722. We do not learn the names of the artists. In 1724 Elisha Kirkall engraved and published seventeen Views of Shipping, from designs by W. Vandevelde, which he printed in a greenish kind of ink; and in a portfolio full of woodcuts in the Print Room of the British Museum Mr. W. J. Linton recently discovered a large Card of Invitation (query—to a wedding?) from *Mr.* Elisha and *Mrs.* Elizabeth Kirkall, dated '*August* the 31st, 1709. Printed at His Majesty's Printing Office in *Blackfryers*,' which is very firmly and boldly engraved, probably in soft metal. On the left of the Royal Arms, Fame, blowing a trumpet, holds up a circular medallion portrait of Guttenburgh (we follow the spelling); a similar figure on the right holds the portrait of W. Caxton and a scroll; at the foot, in the middle, is a view of London Bridge over the Thames, with the Monument and St. Paul's Cathedral, and on either side is a Cupid—one with a torch and a dove, with masonic emblems at his feet, the other with attributes of painting, sculpture, and music. The Cupids are very like the fat-faced little cherubim we so constantly meet with on seventeenth-century monuments, though Mr. Linton has nothing but praise to give to the engraving, which he says is the first example of the use of the 'white line' in English work.

In Paris there was a family of three generations of wood-

engravers named Papillon, who illustrated hundreds of books with small and very fine cuts, in evident imitation of the copper-plates then so much in vogue. Jean Michel Papillon, the youngest of them, published a *Traité Historique et Pratique de la Gravure en Bois*, in two volumes with a supplement, which, though full of credulous errors, has been of inestimable service to all writers on the history of wood-engraving. This Papillon was probably in England at one time, for he received a prize from the Society of Arts. He was born in the year 1698, began to engrave blocks when only eight years old, and lived till the year 1776.

CHAPTER XII

THOMAS BEWICK AND HIS PUPILS

In the year 1775, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts offered a series of small money premiums for the best engravings on wood. These prizes were won by Thomas Hodgson, William Coleman, both then living in London, and Thomas Bewick, of Newcastle, who sent up for competition five engravings intended to illustrate a new edition of 'Gay's Fables.' It is of the last of these three—who received an award of seven guineas, which he immediately gave over to his mother—that we have now to write. He was born at Cherryburn, a farmhouse on the south bank of the Tyne, in the parish of Ovingham, about twelve miles from Newcastle, in August 1753. This we learn from an inscription now over the door of the 'byre,' or cowshed, which is still standing. His father was a farmer, who also rented a small coal-pit at Mickley, close by. After having received a fair education at local schools and at Ovingham parsonage, young Thomas, who had shown a great love of drawing, was in October 1767 apprenticed to Ralph Beilby, a general engraver, in St. Nicholas' Churchyard, Newcastle. Here the boy learned to cut diagrams in wood, engrave copper-plates for books, tradesmen's cards, etch ornament on sword-blades, and other work of the kind, much as Hogarth had done some fifty years before him; and, as luck would have it, his master received an

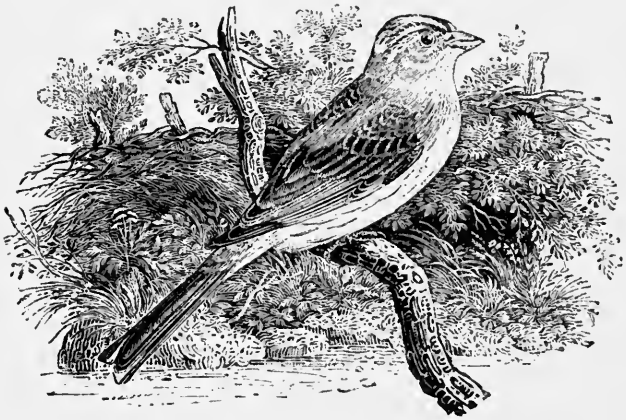
order to engrave a series of wood-blocks to illustrate a 'Treatise on Mensuration' written by Mr. Charles Hutton, a schoolmaster in Newcastle—afterwards Dr. Hutton, a Fellow of the Royal Society. This work was issued in fifty sixpenny numbers, and published in a quarto volume in 1770. It was on this book that Thomas Bewick trained his 'prentice hand in the art in which he was afterwards to become so famous.

At the end of his apprenticeship in 1774, he worked with his old master for a short time at a guinea a week; then he went to live for a time at Cherryburn, and in 1776, with three guineas sewed in his waist-band, he walked to Edinburgh, Glasgow, and northwards to the Highlands, always staying at farm-houses on the road. He returned to Newcastle in a Leith sloop, and, after working till he had earned sufficient money, took a berth in a collier for London, where he arrived in October and soon found several Newcastle friends. But London life did not suit this child of the country-side. 'I would rather be herding sheep on Mickley bank top,' he writes to a friend, 'than remain in London, although for so doing I was to be made Premier of England.'

Soon after his return to Newcastle he joined his old master in partnership, and took his younger brother, John, as an apprentice, and for eight years the brothers made a weekly visit to Cherryburn, often fishing by the way. In the year 1785, their mother, father, and eldest sister all died, and in the following year Thomas Bewick married Isabella Elliot, of Ovingham, one of the companions of his childhood. He was at that time living in the 'fine, low, old-fashioned house'—with a long garden behind it, in which he cultivated roses—formerly occupied by Dr. Hutton; and going daily to work in the old house overlooking St. Nicholas' Churchyard.

We have previously said that the early wood-engravings were cut with a knife, held like a pen and drawn towards the craftsman, on 'planks' of the soft wood of the pear or

apple-tree, or some similar tree. It is believed that Bewick was the first who used the wood of the box-tree, which is very hard, and who made his drawings on the butt-ends of the blocks, and cut his lines with the graver pushed from him. He brought into practice what is known as the 'white line' in wood-engraving; that is, he produced his effects more by means of many white lines wide apart to give an appearance of lightness, and by giving closer lines to



THE YELLOWHAMMER
(*From 'The Land Birds'*)

produce a grey effect, as in our cut of 'The Yellowhammer.' He gave up the old method of obtaining 'colour,' as it is termed, by means of cross-hatching, and used a much simpler and more expeditious way of giving depth of shadow by leaving solid masses of the block, which of course printed black—and he constantly adopted the plan of lowering the wood in the background, and such parts of the block as were required to be printed lightly.

The first book of real importance that was illustrated by Thomas Bewick was the 'Select Fables' published by Saint of Newcastle in 1784; this is now very rare; there is, however, a copy in the British Museum (press-mark 12305 g 16) which can at all times be consulted. Most of the designs are derived from 'Croxall's Fables,' and many of these were copied from the copper-plates by Francis Barlow in his edition of Æsop, published 'at his house, The Golden Eagle, in New Street, near Shoo Lane, 1665.' Though Bewick improved the drawings, there was little originality in them, but the engravings were far in advance of any other work of the kind done at that period. The success of this book induced him to carry out an idea he had long entertained of producing a series of illustrations for a 'General History of Quadrupeds,' on which he was engaged for six years, making the drawings and engraving them mostly in the evening. He tells us he had much difficulty in finding models, and was delighted when a travelling menagerie visited Newcastle and enabled him to depict many wild animals from nature. It was while he was employed on this work that he received a commission to make an engraving of a 'Chillingham Bull,' one of those famous wild cattle to which Sir Walter Scott refers in his ballad, 'Cadyow Castle':

> 'Mightiest of all the beasts of chase
> That roam in woody Caledon.'

He made the drawing on a block $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and used his highest powers in rendering it as true to nature as he could; it is said that he always considered it to be his best work. After a few impressions had been taken off on paper and parchment, the block, which had been carelessly left by the printers in the direct rays of the sun, was split by the heat; and, though it was in after years clamped in gun-metal, no impressions could be taken which did not show

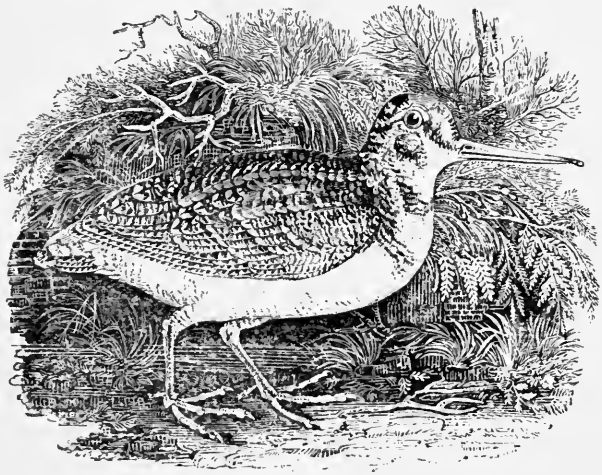
a trace of the accident. Happily, one of the original impressions on parchment may be seen in the Townsend Collection in the South Kensington Museum. Meanwhile the 'Quadrupeds' were going on bravely: Ralph Beilby compiled the necessary text, which Bewick revised where he could, and in 1790 the book was published. It sold so well that a second edition was issued in 1791, and a third in 1792. Since then it has been frequently reprinted. [The first edition consisted of 1,500 copies in demy octavo at 8*s*., and 100 in royal octavo

TAIL-PIECE
(*From 'The Quadrupeds'*)

at 12*s*. The price of the eighth edition, with additional cuts, published in 1825, was one guinea.]

Besides the engravings of quadrupeds, the best that had appeared up to that time, the numerous tail-pieces which Bewick drew from nature charmed the public immensely. We give an example, one of them in which a small boy, said to be a young brother of the artist, is pulling a colt's tail, while the mother is rushing to his rescue. This little cut gives an admirable idea of their style. Many of them are humorous many very pathetic, many grimly sarcastic, and all perfectly original.

As soon as the success of the 'Quadrupeds' was assured, Bewick commenced without delay his still more celebrated book, the 'History of British Birds.' In making the drawings for this work he was much more at home, for he knew every feathered creature that flew within twenty miles of Ovingham, and it was all 'labour of love.' He worked with all his soul first at the 'Land Birds' and afterwards at the 'Water Birds,' and



THE WOODCOCK
(*From* '*The Water Birds*')

it is on these two books that Bewick's fame both as a draughtsman and an engraver principally rests. We give a copy of the 'Yellowhammer,' which the artist himself considered to be one of his best works, and the 'Woodcock,' in which all the excellences of his peculiar style may readily be traced.

The first volume, the 'Land Birds,' appeared in 1797, and was received with rapture by all lovers of nature. Again,

the tail-pieces, pictures in miniature, were applauded to the skies, and the gratified author was beset on all sides with congratulations. Mr. Beilby wrote the descriptions as before, and performed his work very creditably.

The partnership between Ralph Beilby and Thomas Bewick was dissolved in 1797, and the descriptions to the second volume, 'The Water Birds,' which did not appear

A FARMYARD
(*From 'The Land Birds'*)

till 1804, were written by Bewick himself, and revised by the Rev. H. Cotes, Vicar of Bedlington. It is known that Bewick was assisted in the tail-pieces by his pupils, Robert Johnson as a draughtsman, and Luke Clennell as an engraver, but it is certain that every line was done under his immediate superintendence, and no doubt the originator of these excellent works was beginning to feel that he was no longer young.

[Of the first edition of the 'Land Birds' 1,000 were printed in demy octavo at 10*s.* 6*d.*, 850 on thin and thick royal octavo, at 13*s.* and 15*s.*, and twenty-four on imperial octavo at £1 1*s.* The first edition of the 'Water Birds' in 1804 consisted of the same number of copies as that of the 'Land Birds,' but the prices were increased respectively to 12*s.*, 15*s.*, 18*s.*, and £1 4*s.*]

The only book of importance on which Bewick was engaged after 1804 was an edition of 'Æsop's Fables,' which was published in 1818. Mr. Chatto says: 'Whatever may be the merits or defects of the cuts in the Fables, Bewick certainly had little to do with them—for by far the greater number were designed by Robert Johnson and engraved by W. W. Temple and William Harvey, while yet in their apprenticeship.' Bewick amused himself by re-writing the Fables, to which he contributed a few of his own, but he was in no sense a literary man, and several of his greatest admirers openly expressed their disappointment at the bock; even his supreme advocate, Dr. Dibdin, said: 'I will fearlessly and honestly aver that his "Æsop" disappointed me.'

In 1826 Bewick lost his wife, who left to his care one son and three daughters. In the summer of 1828 he visited London alone; he was not in good health, took but little interest in what was going on, and soon longed to return home. There he was busy as ever on a large cut of an old horse 'Waiting for Death' (which Mr. Linton has faithfully copied). Early in November he took the block to the printers to be proved, and after a few days' illness, he died on November 8, 1828. He was buried in Ovingham churchyard, where a tablet is erected to his memory. But his books are his true monument, and they will live for ever.

CHAPTER XIII

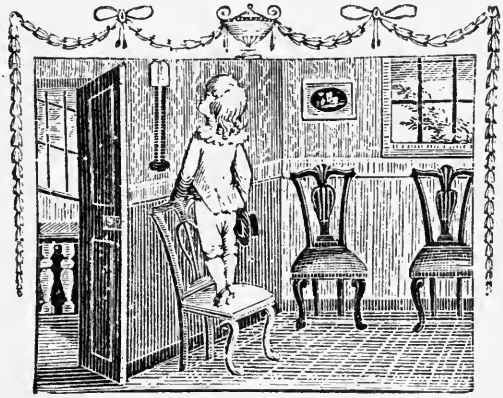
THOMAS BEWICK'S SUCCESSORS

It redounds greatly to the glory of Thomas Bewick that the important advance in the art of wood-engraving which was due to his talents and his industry did not die with him. He left behind him several eminent successors, whose influence is felt to the present day.

His brother John, seven years younger than himself, was his first pupil, and to him we are indebted for the illustrations to a work called 'Emblems of Mortality,' 1789, copied from Holbein's 'Dance of Death,' the 'Looking-Glass for the Mind,' and 'Blossoms of Morality,' 1796. Of these, the cuts in the 'Looking-Glass for the Mind' are decidedly the best, and after examining them carefully we cannot but regret that the artist was taken away so young. His drawings are very unlike those of his elder brother, and are certainly more graceful—we give one as an example of their style. Two other books, 'Poems,' by Goldsmith and Parnell, 1795, and Somerville's 'Chase,' 1796, also contain some of his best work; they were printed in quarto by Bulmer, 'to display the excellence of modern printing and wood-engraving.' For the former of these, John Bewick made most of the drawings, in which he was assisted by the clever artist, Robert Johnson, a fellow-pupil, and nearly all were engraved by Thomas and John Bewick, and a few by another pupil, Charlton Nesbit.

For 'The Chase,' John Bewick made all the drawings except one, and nearly all were engraved by his brother. For five or six years John Bewick lived in London, till ill-health compelled him to return to his native place, where he died in the same year in which Somerville's 'Chase' was published. He was buried in Ovingham churchyard, where a tablet is erected to his memory

Robert Elliot Bewick, the only son of Thomas Bewick,



LITTLE ANTHONY. BY JOHN BEWICK
From 'Looking-Glass for the Mind'

was trained to the business of wood-engraver, and at one time, over the window of the house in St. Nicholas' Churchyard, there was a board with an inscription 'BEWICK AND SON, *engravers and copper-plate printers.*' Robert suffered much from ill-health and turned his attention to drawing rather than engraving. He died in 1849, leaving fifty beautiful designs for a 'History of Fishes,' which he had long in contemplation as a companion volume to his father's works.

These drawings, the gift of the last of Bewick's daughters, are now in the British Museum.

The most celebrated of Bewick's other pupils were Charlton Nesbit, born at Shalwell, near Gateshead, in 1775; Luke Clennell, born at Ulgham, a village near Morpeth, in 1781; and William Harvey, born near Newcastle in 1796. Nesbit engraved a few of the tail-pieces in the 'Land Birds,' and most of the head and tail pieces in the 'Poems' of Goldsmith and Parnell. He also engraved, from a drawing by Robert Johnson, a large block, 15 inches by 12 inches, of St. Nicholas Church, Newcastle, which at the time was considered a triumph of art. About the end of the century Nesbit migrated to London, where for many years he was employed by Rudolph Ackermann and other publishers in engraving the drawings of the artist, John Thurston, whose work was at that time very popular. In 1815 Nesbit returned to Shalwell, where he continued to reside till 1830, doing but little work besides the engraving of 'Rinaldo and Armida' for Savage's 'Hints on Decorative Printing,' after a design by Thurston. This is considered to be his best work. He then went back to London, and was chiefly engaged in engraving drawings by William Harvey for the second volume of Northcote's 'Fables.' He died at Queen's Elms in November 1838, aged 63. Mr. Chatto says: 'Nesbit is unquestionably the best wood-engraver that has proceeded from the great northern hive of art—the workshop of Thomas Bewick.'

The story of Luke Clennell's life is very sad. Like many other artists, he showed an early disposition to make sketches on his slate instead of 'doing sums,' and was often reproved; his uncle sympathised with him, and in 1797 apprenticed him to Thomas Bewick for the usual seven years, during which time he engraved many of the tail-pieces to the 'Water Birds' and learned to make water-colour drawings from nature. When his apprenticeship was over he assisted Bewick in the illustrations to a 'History of England,' pub-

lished by Wallis and Scholey, in which Nisbet had also joined, but finding that Bewick was paid five pounds for each cut, while he received only two pounds, Clennell sent some specimens of his abilities to the publishers, who immediately offered him work in London, where he arrived in the autumn of 1804. Two years afterwards he received the gold palette of the Society of Arts for a wood-engraving of a battle-scene, and soon afterwards he was engaged on illustrations to new editions of Beattie's 'Minstrel,' 1807, and Falconer's 'Shipwreck,' 1808. About this time he married the eldest daughter of Charles Warren, a well-known line engraver, and became intimate with Abraham Raimbach and other artists whose friendship was of much service to him. His most important work as a wood-engraver was the 'Diploma of the Highland Society,' a large block 13½ inches by 10½ inches, of which we give a much-reduced copy. Benjamin West made the original design on paper, Clennell himself drew the Highlander and Fisherman on the wood, and gave Thurston fifteen pounds to fill in the circle with Britannia and her attendant groups. After he had worked on the block, which was of boxwood veneered upon beech, for about two months, the same fate befell it that had ruined Bewick's 'Chillingham Bull'; one evening, while he was at tea, the boxwood split with a loud report, and it is said poor Clennell threw the tea-things into the fire! This was the sad beginning of a long malady. Taking courage, however, he procured a block made of pieces of solid boxwood firmly clamped together, paid Thurston again for drawing the central groups, and, after much labour, produced his *chef d'œuvre*, for which he received 150 guineas from the Highland Society, and was further rewarded with the gold medal of the Society of Arts, May 30, 1809. This second block likewise met with an untimely fate; it was burnt in the fire at Bensley's printing-office. John Thompson afterwards engraved it in fac-simile. A copy of Clennell's original engraving, bequeathed by Mr. John

Thompson, may be seen in the Art Library at South Kensington.

Among the best wood-engravings by Clennell we may rank the illustrations designed by Stothard as head and tail pieces for a small edition of Rogers's 'Pleasures of Memory,'

DIPLOMA OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY
Engraved by Luke Clennell

1810. They were drawn in pen and ink, and engraved in facsimile with charming spirit and fidelity. After this time, Clennell, who could work beautifully in water-colours, gave up engraving and exhibited drawings and paintings at the Academy, the British Institution, and the Exhibition of Painters in Water-Colours at their room in Spring Gardens. In March 1815, the British Institu-

tion set aside 1,000 guineas for premiums for the best oil-paintings illustrating the career of Wellington. One of these premiums was awarded to Clennell for his 'Charge of the Life Guards at Waterloo,' a picture full of spirit, which was afterwards engraved. In 1814 the Earl of Bridgewater gave him a commission to paint 'The Banquet of the Allied Sovereigns in Guildhall.' He experienced great difficulty in obtaining sitters for the necessary portraits, and suffered so much from anxiety that, although in April 1817 he had nearly conquered all his troubles, he suddenly lost his reason. This so much affected his wife that she also became insane and soon died. By the advice of his friends poor Clennell was sent to live with a relation who resided near Newcastle, and there he lingered till February 1840, when he died, leaving three children, who were for a time supported in a great measure by the Committee of the Artists' Fund and by the profits of the engraving of the 'Charge of the Life Guards.'

William Harvey was apprenticed to Bewick in 1810 and was his favourite pupil. He frequently made drawings on the wood after the designs of Robert Johnson, and engraved many of the cuts in 'Bewick's Fables,' 1818. On New Year's Day 1815 Bewick presented him with a copy of his 'History of British Birds' in two volumes, which he always showed to his friends with much pride. In September 1817 Harvey came to London and, to improve his knowledge of drawing, took lessons of an excellent master—B. R. Haydon. While under his tuition Harvey copied his picture of the 'Assassination of Dentatus' on a large block, and engraved it with most elaborate care. This cut has always been greatly admired by the profession, who point to the variety of the lines of engraving in the right leg of Dentatus as being a triumph of their art. If we can find any fault with this celebrated work, it is that, to use Mr. Chatto's words, 'More has been attempted than can be efficiently

represented by means of wood-engraving'—it is, in fact, too much like an attempt to rival copper-plate line-engraving.

About the year 1824 Harvey had so many commissions for designs for both copper-plates and woodcuts that he gave up entirely the practice of engraving, and devoted himself to drawings for the illustration of books. His first successes were his vignettes for Dr. Henderson's 'History of Ancient and Modern Wines,' 1824, the illustrations to Northcote's 'Fables,' 1828 and 1833, the 'Tower Menagerie,' 1828. 'Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society,' 1831, and 'The Children in the Wood' and a 'Story without an End,' 1832. But perhaps his most characteristic designs were the illustrations to Lane's 'Thousand and One Nights' in 1834–40; these are considered to be his best work. He was at this time at the height of his reputation, and for twenty-six years more he almost monopolised the illustration of books published in London. Merely to give a list of them would occupy too much space. During the latter years of his life, Harvey lived near the old church of Richmond, and there he died in 1866. He was one of the most courteous and amiable of men, and though his designs were 'mannered,' they were always pleasant to look at, and often very poetical.

There were other pupils of Bewick who obtained some little fame. Among them were John Anderson, a native of Scotland, who assisted Thurston in illustrating Bloomfield's 'Farmer's Boy,' published in 1800 by Vernor and Hood; John Jackson, who was born at Ovingham in 1801, and Ebenezer Landells, born at Newcastle in 1808. Jackson for some reason quarrelled with his master, came to London and worked for William Harvey, who was much employed about that time in making illustrations for the various works issued by Charles Knight, including the 'Penny Magazine,' Knight's 'Shakspere,' 'Pictorial Bible,' 'Pictorial Prayer-book,' and a hundred other books which appeared between 1828 and 1840—under the auspices of that enterprising publisher. Some of

Jackson's best work will be found in the 'Tower Menagerie' and other illustrations of animals designed by Harvey. He will always be remembered for the share he took in the 'Treatise on Wood-Engraving,' for which Mr. Chatto wrote the text. This work was undertaken at the sole risk of Mr. Jackson, who engraved many of the three hundred illustrations. It is a very valuable book and, supplemented by Mr. Linton's 'Masters of Wood-Engraving,' tells pretty well all that is ever likely to be known of this fascinating art. Jackson died in London in the year 1848.

At the death of Bewick, Ebenezer Landells came to London, 1829, and soon found employment in engraving designs for the *Illustrated London News*, *Punch*, and other periodicals. His studio became quite a nursery of art, and many excellent draughtsmen—among them, Birket Foster—and engravers were educated under his superintendence. He died at Brompton in 1860, the last of Bewick's pupils.

Going back to the last century we find that we have omitted to speak of another self-taught wood-engraver, Robert Branston, who was born in 1778 at Lynn in Norfolk. When he was twenty-one years of age he settled in London and soon found employment in working for the publishers. He engraved the 'Cave of Despair' from a drawing by Thurston for Savage's 'Hints on Decorative Printing' in rivalry with Nesbit's 'Rinaldo and Armida'; this is considered to be his best work. He also assisted in engraving the cuts in Scholey's 'History of England,' Bloomfield's 'Wild Flowers,' 1806, and a series of 'Fables' after Thurston's designs which, though beautifully executed, were never published. He died at Brompton in 1827. Among his pupils were his son, Robert Branston the younger, who for many years produced excellent work.

John Thompson, one of the princes of wood-engravers, was born in Manchester in 1785, came to London early in life, and, after practising for some years under Robert

Branston the elder, soon gained great distinction in his art. Like all other wood-engravers of the period, he was employed chiefly in rendering the designs of Thurston. In 1818 he engraved the illustrations to a new edition of Butler's 'Hudibras,' and about the same time he was engaged

HAYMAKING. BY W. MULREADY, R.A.
Engraved by John Thompson

by the Bank of England to produce a bank-note which could not be imitated. Then followed the illustrations to the 'Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green,' 1832, Shakespeare, 1836, and the 'Arabian Nights,' 1841, all after designs by William Harvey. He also engraved many of the beautiful cuts in the books of Natural History published by Van Voorst. In

1843 he produced the work for which he will for ever be celebrated, the illustrations to the 'Vicar of Wakefield' from the drawings by Mulready—one of the most charming books ever published. It would take too much time to enumerate even the best of the engravings he executed in his long life. We must not, however, forget to mention that he engraved in gun-metal Mulready's design for a postal envelope in 1839, and the figure of Britannia which is still printed on Bank of England notes. He presented his collection of valuable woodcuts to the Art Library at South Kensington, and died at Kensington in 1866, aged 81. His son, Thurston Thompton, was also an excellent engraver.

Among the other celebrated wood-engravers of the latter half of this century were John and Mary Byfield, who engraved the facsimile cuts of Holbein's 'Dance of Death' and 'Scenes from Old Testament History' for Pickering's editions of these celebrated works; W. H. Powis, some of whose best work may be seen in 'Solace of Song'; J. Orrin Smith, born in Colchester in 1800, who placed himself under the tuition of William Harvey, and became a very expert craftsman, and whose best work may be seen in Wordsworth's 'Greece,' 'The Solace of Song,' Lane's 'Arabian Nights,' and in 'Paul et Virginie,' published by Curmer of Paris—Orrin Smith died in 1843; Samuel Williams, also a native of Colchester, who designed on the wood most of the works which he engraved—he was famous for his country scenes, the best of which are in Thomson's 'Seasons' and Cowper's 'Poems,' published about 1840—he died in 1853 in his 65th year; W. T. Green and Thomas Bolton, both excellent reproducers of landscape, and especially of the drawings of Birket Foster; Charles Gray, and Samuel V. Slader, all of the first repute; Orlando Jewitt, celebrated both for his beautiful reproductions of architectural work, for Parker's 'Glossary,' and other important works; and, lately, we have lost J. Greenaway, brother of the famous artist, Kate

Greenaway, and W. J. Palmer, both excellent men and engravers of the very first class.

O'ERARCHED WITH OAKS THAT FORM FANTASTIC BOWERS

Still with us, we can only mention in a few words the modern prince of wood-engravers, W. J. Linton, who has for

many years resided in America; W. L. Thomas, the originator of *The Graphic* newspaper, and one of the ablest artists in water-colours in 'The Institute'; Edmund Evans and Horace Harral, who so successfully rendered Birket Foster's drawings some years ago; J. W. Whymper, the brothers Dalziel and James Cooper, the producers of thousands of good engravings, and a comparatively new man, W. Biscombe Gardner, who excels in portraiture.

In Germany, during the last half-century, wood-engraving met with much encouragement, and reverting to the earlier and purer style of the fifteenth century, many artists and engravers produced work of great merit: E. Kretzschmar, of Leipsic, the brothers A. and O. Vogel, F. Unzelmann and H. Müller, rendered the drawings of Adolf Menzel and Ludwig Richter with careful exactitude. In the atelier of Hugo Bürkner, of Dresden, the much-admired 'Death as a Friend,' by Rethel, was engraved by Jungtow, and 'Death as an Enemy' by Steinbrecher: and A. Gaber, recently deceased, faithfully reproduced the drawings of Overbeck, Schnorr von Carolsfeld, Oscar Pletsch, and Moritz von Schwind. Of living engravers we may refer our readers to the excellent examples of skill to be seen in the 'Meisterwerke der Holzschneidekunst,' a monthly periodical of great merit; and especially to the works of Pfnorr of Darmstadt; Höfel of Vienna; Flegel and Weber of Leipsic; Mezger and Vieweg of Brunswick; H. Günter, Karl Oertel, Lüttge, and E. Krelb.

In France no great advance has been made, and most of the engravers have been contented to produce work a little above mediocrity. Several French publishers have given commissions to English engravers—Orrin Smith, Henry Linton, and others.

In America great strides have been made, and, in the estimation of many excellent judges, the best works ever done by wood-engravers have been presented to us in the pages of the illustrated magazines. These publications excite

our wonder not only at the great energy which is thrown into them, apparently without regard to cost, but at the immense success which they have justly achieved. Some critics disapprove of the style to which we have just referred, and say it is in too close an imitation of steel engraving, but it seems hard to censure works which have given unbounded satisfaction to so many thousand lovers of art.

Owing to the invention of various mechanical processes, and the perfection to which photography has attained, the art of wood-engraving would seem to be in danger of becoming extinct. This is by no means the real case, for the brilliant band of wood-engravers which has arisen in America, of whom we have just spoken, still continue to give us excellent examples of their skill; and especially we may mention the inimitable copies of paintings by the Old Masters by Timothy Cole, whose rendering of Paul Potter's 'Young Bull' excites our warmest admiration.

In England, under the influence of Mr. William Morris and his followers, a revival of this interesting craft, as practised in the fifteenth century, has been set on foot in some of the Schools of Art—notably at Birmingham, where in 1893 the students issued a Book of Carols illustrated with original designs, some of which were cut by the students themselves. This revival of the earlier and purer methods of engraving, coupled with a careful study of the possibilities of the art, may be taken as a sign that by no means the last chapter on the history of engraving on wood has yet been written.

At present, much of the new process work which we find in such over-abundance in newspapers and magazines is slovenly to the last degree. On the other hand, now and then we see beautiful results—the best in the American magazines; let us hope that the facile cheapness of this new craft—art it cannot be called—will in good hands soon achieve something more worthy of our regard.

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